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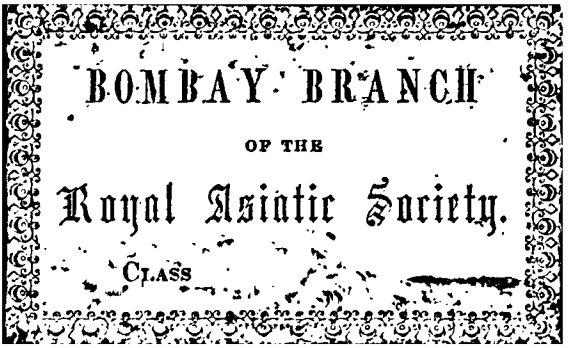

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ENGLISH WRITERS

AN ATTEMPT TOWARDS

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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BY

HENRY MORLEY

LL.D. PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

IV

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

IN TWO BOOKS:—BOOK I

CASSELL & COMPANY LIMITED

LONDON PARIS NEW YORK & MELBOURNE

1889

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ENGLISH WRITERS.

BOOK IV.

The Fourteenth Century.

IN TWO BOOKS.—BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

"THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE."

"LE ROMAN DE LA ROSE" was the fashionable book at the English Court in the beginning of the fourteenth century. Guillaume de Lorris, in the earlier half of the thirteenth century, had expanded the love-fancies of the troubadour into a long allegorical dream of the experiences of the lover. He represented Beauty as the Rose, the gathering of the Rose as the fruition of Love, and the passions that attend on Love as persons of his drama. "Le Roman de la Rose."

Guillaume de Lorris died leaving his work unfinished. Forty years later a second writer, Jean de Meung, finished the long allegory, and entering into the new temper of the time he joined to the work satire against the degradation of womanhood and the corruption spreading among

nobles and the clergy. The poem thus begins in good faith with a dreamy sense of love and chivalry, and where the second writer takes up the dropped thread of the allegory it becomes alive with the new forces of the people's thought. "The Romaunt of the Rose" was but the more popular for this.

The taste for that form of ingenuity which consists in the figuring of one thing by another (a taste that we have traced down from the Fathers of the Christian Church*) had been especially cultivated by the poets in France and in Italy who sang in the Provençal manner. The double sense was as necessary to the art of many poems as the rhyme itself; and clever readers liked to look for it, or make it for themselves. Thus, then, in the "Roman de la Rose," for one the Rose might symbolise the Virgin Mary, for another, the Philosopher's Stone. Each adapted the allegory to his own sense of the object most worthy of search. When the continuation of the work, already so popular as to be widely imitated, was, at the wish of Philippe le Bel, written by Jean de Meung in the rigorous spirit of the reformers of that day, its popularity and influence were increased threefold. And this, of course, none the less for the offence it gave, and for the ban it was put under by one section of knights, priests, and women.

> "Se bien veux et chastement vivre
> De la Rose ne lis le livre,"

is one of the notable morals of Christine de Pisan. What it then meant is evidenced by the fact that in the sixteenth century Clement Marot, the wit and poet of French Protestantism, published an edition of it; and by the fact that Etienne Pasquier, vigorous in combat against the pride of the Pope and the encroachments of the Jesuits, was in

* "E. W." II. 122; III. 374—376.

such close harmony with its spirit that he preferred the "Roman de la Rose" to the Divine Comedy. The popularity of the "Roman de la Rose" was great throughout Europe. Of the poem as it has come down to us Guillaume de Lorris wrote, probably in the reign of Philip Augustus, between the years 1200 and 1230, the first 4,070 lines; the rest, in 18,002 lines, is by Jean de Meung. The author of the continuation makes Love say that after that faithful servant Guillaume—may his tomb ever diffuse odour of incense!—should come Jean Clopinel (John Hobbler), born at Meung-sur-Loire, who all his life long should be true to Love, and show, it was to be hoped, wisdom enough to keep always far from Reason, Love's enemy. He was to continue the "Roman de la Rose," and work at it after forty years. The two trouvères, Guillaume and Jean, both lived in the valley of the Loire; Lorris and Meung being places not forty miles distant from each other. Meung is by the river-side, now a town of less than four thousand inhabitants, with tanneries and paper-mills; Lorris, a town now of two thousand inhabitants, is about ten miles from the river, higher up the stream; and both are in the present department of the Loiret, which has been called the Garden of France.

Guillaume de Lorris planned a poem not upon the Art of Love, although sometimes its doctrine is based upon Ovid's "Art of Love," with imitations and translations of some passages adapted to the way of his own time. His argument is of Love's pains and pleasures, and so courtly that Poverty was not allowed to pass within the high enclosure of Love's garden. The reader now finds Guillaume's part of the "Roman de la Rose" an ingenious allegory, distinguished by a musical and very graceful tediousness. Guillaume, with little playing upon words, almost no satire, and little show of erudition, was in good faith spinning the course of love into a parable of which, if he had finished it,

Guillaume de Lorris.

he might have fulfilled his promise to supply his own detailed interpretation. In after-years Clement Marot attached to it spiritual meanings—Wisdom, Grace, the Virgin, Glory of Eternal Bliss; and it is not to be forgotten that the bent of monastic trifling, which assigned to love-verses of the cloister a second spiritual sense, had given a turn for double allegory to the taste of the Provençal troubadours who formed the style of Guillaume de Lorris.

"Roman de la Rose;" the Part by Guillaume de Lorris.

He dreamt that, in spring-time, he walked outside the town and came to a meadow by a little river, where there were high walls painted with allegorical figures of Hatred, Avarice, Envy, Age, Sadness, Poverty, and other ills. He went round till he found the one small entrance-gate, which was opened to him by the beautiful portress Oyseuse,—Idleness opening the entrance-gate to Love. She told him courteously that the garden belonged to a bachelor named Déduit (Pastime), who often came thither to divert himself with his friends. Guillaume asked to see Pastime, and was admitted into the garden, where birds made sweet concert in the branches of the trees, and where he saw Pastime and his companions, beautiful as angels, dancing to the songs of his lady Dame Liesse (Lady Gladness), by whose side was Love. A lady named Courtesy invited Guillaume to take part in the amusement. Encouraged by his reception, Guillaume observed and described closely the chiefs of the company. Beside Love was a fair boy, named Doulx-Regard (Sweet-Look), who carried his two bows—one of knotted wood, ill-turned; the other of smooth wood, well painted. Doulx-Regard held five arrows tipped with gold—All-Beauty, Simplicity, Frankness, Company, and Fair-Seeming; and five tipped with black and rusty iron—Pride, Evil-Speaking, Hate, Covetousness, and Despair. Guillaume also saw and described, as ladies of the court of Pastime, Beauty, Wealth, Pretty Endearment, Bounty, Frankness, Courtesy, and Youth.

But while he was observing all this, Love saw him, asked Sweet-Look to bend one of his bows and give him five arrows, wherewith Love then hunted Guillaume, who observed, as he ran, the beauties of the park. He found a fountain which had served as mirror to the disdainful youth who was beloved of the nymph Echo. Whoever looked into that magic spring saw all that was in the garden. Guil-

laume, in looking into it, saw a rose-tree loaded with flowers that scented all the air of the garden, and he went towards the tree to pluck a rose, but as he went, Love, who saw him from under a fig-tree, pierced him with his five arrows.

Thenceforth the dreamer was the Lover. He went for solace to the rose-tree, breathed its soft perfume, was shot with a sixth balm-bearing arrow, that called Beau-Semblant (Fair-Seeming), and when this had pierced him, he knelt at the feet of Love and paid him homage. Love, accustomed to deceivers, asked for a pledge of his faith. The Lover offered his heart. This Love closed with a little gold key, and then, bidding him fear nothing, taught the Lover what laws he must obey. Observance of them would make him lean.

The true lover is distinguished by his leanness from false lovers and traitors, who are as plump as priors and abbés. He is sustained under trials by Doulx-Penser (Sweet-Thought), dreaming of his mistress; Doulx-Parler (Sweet-Words), talking of her to some friend; and Doulx-Regard (Sweet-Look), recollection of her charms. Love disappeared and left the Lover in affliction. He would have comforted himself by going close to his Rose and smelling it, but feared lest he might seem like one who meant to steal it. Then Bel-Acueil (Fair-Reception), son of Courtesy, offered him free passage to the roses, if he would content himself with smelling them; whereat he was happy. But a great black bristling man, one of the porters of the garden, named Danger, now appeared, and with a threatening voice ordered away the Lover and Fair-Reception. He had with him Evil-Mouth, and Shame, and Fear. Shame was the daughter of Reason, and her father was Misdeed; but the daughter of Shame was Chastity, against whom Venus waged a constant war.

The sad Lover now reproached Love, and there came to his aid Reason, who, telling him that Idleness had let him into this, advised him to escape the yoke of Love and make an end of the foolish longing for a rose-bud. Failing to persuade him, Reason retired on a light wing to her heavenly abode.

The Lover sought a Friend to whom to tell his troubles, and was advised by his Friend to come to terms with Danger. Danger promised to forget what had happened, on condition that the Lover should not pass the hedges which enclosed the rose-garden. Frankness and Pity were touched by the Lover's trouble at this hard condition, and joined in the Lover's prayer for better terms. Upon which Danger relented, and the Lover was allowed to go into the garden with Fair-Reception. But when he had thus entered, the Rose seemed more beautiful than before, and he prayed leave to kiss it. Fair-Reception opposed; but

Venus, appearing, bade him cease his opposition. The sight of the torch of Venus inflamed the passion of the Lover, and he sought relief in kisses of the Rose. Evil-Mouth saw him, and told Jealousy, who, being always prompt to believe ill, picked a quarrel with the Lover. Shame argued in vain that Evil-Mouth was a liar by trade. Jealousy would dig a trench and build walls about the rose-garden, and would set up a tower in the midst, for the imprisonment of Fair-Reception. Fear came, and was troubled about this, and afterwards took private counsel with Shame to avert the harm that would come of the wrath of Jealousy. They resolved to look for Danger, whom they rebuked for his lax guard, and who promised to watch better in future. Jealousy meanwhile built his tower, in which he shut up Fair-Reception, setting Danger, Fear, Shame, and Evil-Mouth to watch the doors. The Lover, distressed at the fate of Fair-Reception, without whom he was helpless, began a lament.

It is in the midst of this lament that Guillaume de Lorris's part of the poem ends and Jean de Meung's begins, with an abrupt dash into the middle of the discourse.* Guillaume de Lorris is said by his last editor to have really finished his work in seventy-nine more lines, that gave to his Lover possession of the Rose, with Beauty's promise that while his heart was good and sound he should not be disturbed in his possession of it. But the additional lines, found in one or two manuscripts of the close of the fourteenth century, are rightly described by M. Paulin Paris† as additions made by an unknown person for the

* The last lines of Guillaume's part are :—

"Et si l'ai-ge perdu espoir,
A poi que ne m'en desespoir."

and Jean continues :—

"Desespoir, las ! ge non ferai,
Jà ne m'en desespererai."

† "Hist. Littéraire de la France commencé par des Bénédictins de Saint-Maur," tom. xxiii. (Paris), 1856. The opening article of that volume is by M. Paulin Paris on the "Roman de la Rose," and I am indebted to it as well as to M. Meon ("Roman de la Rose," tome 4, Paris, 1814) for information given in the text.

sake of giving to the work of Guillaume de Lorris a sort of completeness. It is absurd to suppose that after raising all his difficulties Guillaume would suddenly have put his Lover in possession of the Rose and brought the story to an end. Moreover, if Guillaume had finished his poem, Jean would not have said that he left it unfinished, also distinctly pointing out the place where he left off.* Guillaume de Lorris wrote his poem, as he himself says, at the age of five-and-twenty, probably between the years 1200 and 1230.† If, therefore,

In the lines :—

"Cy endroit trespassa Guillaume
De Loris et n'en fist plus pseaulme ;
Mais, après plus que quarante ans,
Maitre Jehan de Meung ce Rommans
Parfist, ainsi comme je treuve ;
Et ici commence son œuvre."

† M. Meon, in his edition of the "Roman de la Rose," says that Guillaume probably died in 1260 or 1262, and this date has been generally followed. But M. Raynouard pointed out (in his review of Meon's edition in the *Journal des Savans*, Oct., 1816) that Jean de Meung, in his continuation (said to have been written forty years after the death of Guillaume de Lorris) speaks of Charles of Anjou as the living king of Sicily :—

"Est ores de Secile roi."

He was crowned in 1266, expelled from Sicily in 1282, and dead in 1285. Forty years before the time when Charles of Anjou reigned in Sicily would, therefore, be a date between 1226 and 1242. M. Paulin Paris ("Hist. Litt. de la France," tom. xxiii., pp. 24, 25, 43, 44) cites other passages ; as mention of the imprisonment of Henry of Spain, of the exile of Guillaume de St. Amour in 1256, and of the second Robert of Artois, who "devint homme devant ses jours," a compliment paid apparently in the days of his youth, or between the years 1265 and 1270. Such references certainly carry back to the days of Philip Augustus the poem written at the age of twenty-five by one who died forty years before Jean de Meung began its continuation. M. Meon only observed that the continuation was written before 1305, because Jean de Meung simply includes the Knights Templars among

it was interrupted by his death, the trouvère died young. It was forty years after his death that Jean de Meung began the continuation, which was written probably about the year 1270, and could not have been written later than the year 1282. Jean de Meung says in his Testament that it was a work of his youth; it was a most successful work, for it is certain that the continuation of the "Roman de la Rose" gave its fame to the original poem. The success of Jean de Meung was strengthened by the violent abuse he provoked from those whom his satires on society offended. The lame trouvère, among whose other writings are a Testament containing satire upon all ranks in the kingdom, and a Codicil containing long reflections on theology mixed with a little satire and a great display of mediæval learning, tells us also of himself in his Testament that "God gave him to serve the greatest people in France;" and in his preface to Boëthius, addressed to King Philip the Fair, he says that he had translated from Latin a book of Vegetius on the "Military Art," a book on the "Marvels of Ireland," Aelred on "Spiritual Friendship," the "Letters of Eloisa and Abelard," and translates now the "Consolations" of Boëthius. No more is known of the life of this French poet who wrote in the days of Dante's youth.

Jean de Meung.

In the hands of Jean de Meung the characters of the original allegory of the "Roman de la Rose" remain, but with changed natures. The timid grace of one young trouvère was followed by the bold wit of another, as young or younger, who was crammed with the scholarship of his time, and poured it out in diffuse illustration of his argument; but who, a man of the people, alive with the stir of his time against polished hypocrisy, annoyed priests with his satire, and court ladies with rude estimate of their prevailing

regular religious bodies, and strong accusations were made against them in 1307, before the abolition of the order in 1309.

character. Underlying all his part of the "Romaunt of the Rose" is a religious earnestness that gave its verses currency, and made them doubly troublesome to those who dreaded free thought and full speech.

President Fauchet has preserved a story of Jean de Meung, which says that the poet was brought by some gentlemen into a company of ladies of the court, who had provided themselves each with a handful of twigs, and meant to whip him. His crime was the writing of those lines in which he made a jealous person attack women, and say of the fine ladies that all of them were, had been, or would be, unchaste in fact or in desire. The story runs that he stayed all their hands by begging that, as he had not attacked the wise and fair and good, the first stroke might be laid on by the stoutest woman of the class he had offended. Another tale about him is that he left at his death a handsome and heavy coffer to the Jacobins of Paris, on condition that they should not open it until after his burial. In expectation of a rich atonement for past satires on their order, the Jacobins gave the poet handsome burial within their church. But when they found in the coffer only slates covered with calculations in arithmetic and geometry, they would have dug him up again if the Parliament of Paris had not interfered.

Reason reappears at once in Jean de Meung's continuation of the romance, and is a plain speaker. Indeed, the Lover is made to reproach her for not using disguises of speech, and gets from her the true answer that she is ashamed only of sin, and accounts noble, and worthy of its true and simple name, every work of God. The whole argument is pure in thought and in design, yet it is one that wilfully inflicts the roughest shocks on the conventional sense of propriety. Jean de Meung was a religious man, with active energetic interest in the condition of society, and his satire really demanded of both men and women that

they should lead pure and honest lives. Jean de Meung was, as to such matters, of one mind with the Proverbs of Solomon. The mere outline of the story of the "Roman de la Rose" as he continued it is no index to the wealth of doctrine and illustration poured out, with no very close regard to the dramatic unity of the whole work, through every speaker in the allegory.

"Roman de la Rose;" the Part by Jean de Meung.

The Lover, when lamenting the imprisonment of Fair-Reception, is again visited by Reason. This time it is Jean de Meung's Reason, who paints to him the slavery of love that looks only to pleasure, and praises the more spiritual aid of Friendship, that is superior to the inconstancies of Fortune. Reason blames vanity of youth and follows Tully in praise of old age; discusses friendship, also with use of thoughts from Cicero; censures Avarice and delight in this world's riches; upholds virtue and moderation as man's only stable wealth. The labourer who earns his bread from day to day is happier than a king.

Thus far the "Roman de la Rose" is translated in the version that has been ascribed to Chaucer. From the rest of the poem we have only a translation of that part which in the following outline is included in brackets [ ].

"But," says the Lover, "as to Friendship, it is a small matter; Tully himself found only two or three perfect examples of it in the ancient world, and do you think me wiser than Tully?" Jean de Meung's Reason counsels then the diffused love that nature prompts, the simple desire to do to others as we would they should do to us. If mankind followed that precept, there would be need neither of kings nor of judges. Reason proceeds to describe the character of the judge who sells his decision, a robber who better deserves hanging than the thief he condemns to the gallows. She tells, from Livy, the story of the unjust judge Appius and the daughter of Virginius; invites the Lover to attach himself to her, and be as the wise men of old who despised the caprices of Fortune. She personifies Fortune with an allegory, and tells of those caprices which lift up the insignificant to honour, and cast down those whom we call the great into the first state of nothingness. The story of the crimes of Nero shows that the high gifts of Fortune do not make men better; they rather fall under the despotism of their own power. Let us not envy the exaltation of the wicked, seeing that the more terrible will be their fall. Nero was

reduced to self-murder. Crœsus only escaped death at the hands of Cyrus as by a miracle. It was Hecuba's grief to survive the burning of Troy. Reason cites also from recent history the fall of Manfred, conquered by Charles of Anjou, and the fate of the young Conradin; this being a part of the poem from which its date may within a few years be determined. "Rash Lover," says Reason, "despise Fortune and the God of Love; attach yourself to me."

To all this the liegeman of Love replies that he cannot abate his passion for the Rose; and, to turn the tables on his monitress, accuses her of an immodest word. Reason replies as we have seen, and leaves the Lover to his own devices.

He looks for the Friend who had before advised him, and who advises him now that, if he has had one kiss from his mistress, he will have another; but he should affect a little indifference, and must win to his side the custodians of Fair-Reception—Evil-Mouth, Jealousy, Shame, and Danger. The Lover objects to soft dealing with those whom he would like to see hanged. "There is another way," says the Friend, "if you were rich enough, and that is Lavish-Giving. It is a road made of old time by Bounty. Every tower falls before those who travel by this road; but on that way I am too poor to be your guide."

Then, through the Friend, Jean de Meung discourses in his own way against prodigality, and against the women who look to the profit they can make of lovers. This leads him to a description of the poets' Age of Gold, which touches by inference on more than one of the ills of his own time. And now, to show the Lover something of the ills of love, the Friend takes on himself for a while the character of one phrensied with jealousy, and tells of the trouble with a poor wife for whom all must be earned by labour; with a rich wife who is proud and contemptuous; with a fair wife who attracts lovers; and with an ugly wife who does all that she can to make herself agreeable to others.* To this part of the poem, which extends over nine hundred lines, belong the verses that offended Christine de Pisan. He tells of

* "If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presénce,
Shew thou thy visage and thin apparaille:
If thou be foule, be free of thy dispence,
To get thee frendés ay do thy travaille:
Be ay of chere as light as lefe on linde,
And let him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waile."

Chaucer, in the "Clerkes Tale."

Penelope and Lucretia; quotes Juvenal; refers to Abelard; attacks the extravagant cost of the vain ornaments of women; tells of Hercules and Dejanira, and of Samson and Dalilah; and then figures the jealous man worked up by such diseased thoughts to ill-treatment of his wife, because he makes himself the master of her who was designed by nature for his equal and companion, and whose companion he should be, not her lord and master. This, be it observed, is the poet's worthy estimate of woman; the disdainful censure, that formed part of the train of thought forming the torment of jealousy, was dramatic exaggeration of the censures to which levity laid woman open. This tyranny of man over woman was not suffered in the good old times; wealth was divided evenly, all people were at peace, till Deceit and Ambition broke the bonds of Peace, Poverty came from hell and brought to earth her son Larceny, with Discord and War in her train. Then began invasions, usurpations. The boniest men, strong to command and defend others, were made kings, and had domains assigned to them for their subsistence. These were not enough for them, and the people contributed to increase their revenues. So taxes and imposts first came in. But through the Friend in the poem, Jean de Meung launched his wrath against those who grew fat upon the substance of the poor. Finally, the Friend gave the Lover counsel touching behaviour as a lover and a mistress, which he took with him to the path that was guarded by Riches, who refused him entrance because he was not in her good graces.

Love, pitying the Lover, then descended to him, and asked him whether he had remembered and observed his commandments. The Lover repeated them immediately without a fault, and was promised Love's continual protection. Then Love called all his lieges to join in attack on the castle in which Fair-Reception had been imprisoned. Aid was to be given to the Lover, who is named as Love's servant, Guillaume de Lorris; forty years after whose death shall come Jehan Clopinel, who will take up the tale of love, and serve Love all his days. Leisure, Bounty, Honour, Simplicity, Courtesy, and the rest of the Barons of the Court, came to the siege; [but there came also, to Love's annoyance, False-Seeming, son of Barratry, and the perfidious Hypocrisy. Constrained-Abstinence obtained by prayer leave for her brother False-Seeming to serve in the ranks of Love. Love bade False-Seeming teach the Lover by what marks he might be known, and the reply of False-Seeming is Jean de Meung's religious attack upon hypocrisy, both in the world and in the cloister. Especially he attacks the men of feigned devotion, who falsely affect fasting and poverty, and who combine for the ruin of those who attack their vices. When these

lines were written, there was hot war between the mendicant orders and the University of Paris. Jean de Meung sided with the University champion, Guillaume de Saint Amour. False-Seeming asks alms, but lives upon tit-bits; he has Bulls which qualify him to absolve from sins before he has heard one word of confession. He is most surely to be found in a religious coat with mortified exterior, haunting the palaces of princes. False-Seeming was sworn to the service of Love, and then joined his sister Constrained-Abstinence in search of Evil-Mouth, the first who must be overcome. To him False-Seeming preached, with a devout air, so touching a sermon against the wickedness of slander, that Evil-Mouth came to confession,] when Constrained-Abstinence throttled her till she lolled out her tongue, which False-Seeming then cut off with a razor that he carried hidden under his Dominican robe. Then they entered the court of the fortress and killed the Norman soldiers who slept, drunk with wine. Bounty, Courtesy, False-Seeming, and Constrained-Abstinence next persuaded the duenna who had care of Fair-Reception to let the Lover see her prisoner, who, in dread of Jealousy, was hardly persuaded by the duenna to accept a chaplet of flowers. The duenna proceeded to remark Fair-Reception's beauty, that she might have occasion to discourse at large upon her own, now lost. She instructed Fair-Reception, very much out of Ovid, in the tricks of Love, and especially in the duty of young women to get all they can from men, and give them nothing. In irony commending faithlessness, she cites pious Æneas, Demophon, Paris, and Jason. Women cannot help loving, she says. The duenna had herself given all to a young man who cared only to plunder her of the gifts she received from other lovers. Fair-Reception promised to be the better for these lessons, and asked that the Lover might be brought now to his prison, on condition that he keep his affection within bounds of respect. When he came they embraced, and he received gladly from Fair-Reception the offer of his services. Then the Lover was about to kiss the Rose, when Danger saw him and set up a cry. Shame and Fear set upon Fair-Reception, and, after beating him cruelly, shut him in a dungeon. He might have been killed if the barons of Love's army had not come to his help. Here Jean de Meung apologises to true ladies and the truly pious for his free speaking against those who are falsely confounded with them, and argues that in his attack on hypocrites he takes no new ground, but only follows in the track of poets and philosophers. And now, at last, he comes to the fight between the soldiers of Love and the defenders of the castle of Jealousy. The besieged were too strong for him, and Love begged a twelve-day truce, that he might have time to send for help to his Mother. His ambassadors

arrived at Cythera, where Venus held her court, and found her at rest in the wood with Adonis, where she gave him the good counsel on the chase which he would die afterwards for disregarding. Here dexterous use is made of Ovid's tale of "Venus and Adonis." On hearing of her son's distress, Venus had six pigeons harnessed to her car, and went to the help of the army that—Love being a bad keeper of compacts—had broken truce and again waged a despairing battle. Venus, seeing the straits of Love, vowed that there should be no more chastity in women; and Love, on his part, vowed that there should be no more chastity in men.

Nature meanwhile was at her forge, repairing day by day the losses of the battle. Art sat at her feet, watching her, and seeking to imitate her processes. Nature, in deep grief, abated of her industry, and sent for the priest Genius, that she might confess to him how much she had desired to leave the human race to perish. Genius, when he arrived, told her that her tears were feminine, and preached against the quick temper of women and their small discretion. Then Nature knelt and began her confession with the creation of the world and the harmony of the spheres; came then to the way in which the race of man shortens its days, and vainly casts responsibility upon the figures of the stars; was led by this into an argument upon predestination, from which Nature passed to the thunder and the rainbow, light, and optic glasses, and false superstition attached to the natural appearances of comets in the sky. Why should a comet come because a king is dead, when the dead body of a king differs in nothing from that of a carter? Virtue is the sole nobility, and highest virtue is sometimes in men of obscure birth. Nowadays not poetry and philosophy, but success in the chase, graces a man; the sole virtue is nobility of name. It is here that the young Count Robert of Artois is cited as a living type of a true gentleman. Of what use the name, if we have not the qualities of those who first made it a name of honour? This confession of Nature is, in fact, a poem upon God and man in their relation to the world. Nature tells Genius that she complains, not of the elements, or of the rest of creation, that brings forth its right fruit in due season; but only of man. This man, the microcosm, for love of whom a God became incarnate and died on the cross, is delivered up to all the vices for which Nature now asks vengeance, and especially to sins against her laws established for the propagation of his kind. Nature, having received absolution and order to work at her forge, sends Genius then to Love and Venus at the camp. There all were glad of the High Priest's arrival, except False-Semblance and Constrained-Abstinence, who slipped away without farewells. Love attired Genius in the chasuble,

ring, cross, and mitre of a bishop. Genius then declared the commands of Nature, and pronounced his sentence of excommunication against those who sinned against Nature's own laws of love. Genius discoursed of the acts of Jupiter, and of the garden of our innocent first parents, comparing that Eden to the Rose Garden of the allegory, a garden constructed by weak mortal hands; comparing also the Rose Garden's fountain of Narcissus, a fountain of self-worship, with the springs of the divine essence and the fountain of eternal life. Of that fountain Genius bids them qualify themselves hereafter to drink.

Then the soldiers of Love, animated by the address of their Priest, prepared to renew the attack. Venus summoned Shame to surrender, threatening pillage of all the roses in the garden.

Before leaving, Genius threw into the air the torch that had been placed in his hands by Love. The flame reached to the prison of Fair-Reception, and disposed his harsh jailers to tenderness. While Venus drove away Shame and Fear, and directed an arrow against the Rose that was the prize of victory, the Lover saw in the attractive Rose a parallel to the beloved statue of Pygmalion. This gives occasion to the poet for an amplified paraphrase from Ovid of the story of Pygmalion, who is made to present the Lover to his image, when the arrow shot by Venus gives, as it were, life to the statue. The brand of Venus thrown into the castle put to flight all its defenders. Courtesy, Pity, and Franchise were first to enter and go through the fire to Fair-Reception, whom Courtesy was first to address and beseech in the name of all to concede to the Lover his desires, citing Virgil for authority that "Amor vincit omnia." So let him pluck the Rose. Fair-Reception replied that he might, and the Lover was at hand immediately with his thanks and his reply. That reply of his, with the description of the plucking of the Rose, paints in diffuse allegory the consummation of a fleshly love. So ends the poem :—

> "Ainsi oi la Rose vermeille,
> Atant fu jor, et je m'esveille."

No commentator on the "Roman de la Rose" has observed that the character of Genius (who comes to confess Nature, and is sent by her to the army of Love, for whose service he is robed and mitred—the same who reappears as the Confessor of the Lover in Gower's English poem) was taken by Jean de Meung from one of the books of Alain de l'Isle. Alain de

Alain de l'Isle "De Planctu Naturæ."

l'Isle was the Universal Doctor, who died early in the thirteenth century, and of whom it used to be a proverb that only to look at him was learning.* One of his books, in prose mingled with verse, was called the "Complaint of Nature"—"Liber de Planctu Naturæ."† Here Nature is represented as ceasing from her work because of the degeneracy of the relations between men and women; is described with elaborate allegory; addresses Alain; is invoked by him in Sapphic metre to tell why she comes, and why she weeps; and having answered these questions, in reply to others she sets forth the vices of mankind. After this, Hymen arrives with Chastity, Temperance, Bounty, and Humility, and the complaint of Nature being continued, Hymen is sent by Nature with a letter to Genius (which Alain gives at length), bidding Genius come and, in her presence, excommunicate the sons of abomination from the sacraments of her Church. Upon the coming of Genius, attended by Truth as by a daughter, Nature goes out to receive him with the kiss of mystical love. Genius approves of the severe edict of Nature against those who abuse her laws. Then Genius puts off his lay clothes, and, robed in sacerdotal vestments, cuts off from the kiss of supreme Love and the grace of Nature all those of whose misdoing Nature had complained, and deprives of the seal of Venus all who make unnatural exception to the rule of Venus. When Genius had ceased, the virgins in attendance upon Nature said "Amen," and turned their candles to the earth, so that the light went out and the vision of the dreamer ended.

Jean de Meung had not written three hundred lines of his continuation before he alluded to this work of Alain's, in making Reason say incidentally to the Lover that "they are only those of evil love whom Genius excommunicated

* The proverb was "Sufficiat vobis vidisse Alanum."

† It is, with Alain's other works, in "Migne's Patrologia," vol. 210 (Paris), 1855.

because they do wrong to Nature;"* and, as we have seen, the complaint of Nature is, in accordance with the earnest didactic spirit of the poet, connected closely with the final summing up of the Romance of Love. Genius consoles Nature, and at the crisis of the story Genius delivers to the hosts of Love a poetical paraphrase of the excommunication invented by Alain de l'Isle. Alain's excommunication was meant as a pure-hearted popular protest against common vices, and with design as pure it was popularised by Jean de Meung yet more completely, in the playful earnestness of a paraphrase by which it was incorporated in the literature of the people.

Our literature of the fourteenth century includes part of a translation of the "Roman de la Rose," which has been ascribed to Chaucer. Of that we shall speak hereafter. The poem itself, as we have seen, is of the thirteenth century, and was completed by the time when Dante was a youth of seventeen.

* "Se ne sunt cil de male vie
Que Genius escommenie,
Por ce qu'il font tort à Nature."—Ll. 4,356-8.

CHAPTER II.

PETRARCH AND BOCCACCIO.

THE higher influence of Italy upon our literature in the days of Chaucer, established by the genius of Dante, was spread in many forms by the works of the two younger poets Petrarch and Boccaccio, who were both born in the earlier years of the fourteenth century. Dante, born in 1265, was thirty-nine years old at the time of the birth of Petrarch in 1304, and forty-eight at the time of the birth of Boccaccio in 1313. When Dante died in 1321, Petrarch was a youth of seventeen, Boccaccio a boy of eight. The fourteenth century opened with Dante in the fulness of his power, and in its mid-course Petrarch and Boccaccio added their living influences on the world of thought, and touched with their own fire the genius of Chaucer.

The three patriarchs of modern literature: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

Petrarch, born at Arezzo in 1304, was of the Florentine republic, but of a family less noble than Dante's. His father and grandfather were notaries. His father Pietro, son of Parenzo, being known by the familiar diminutive Petraccha, the son Francisco was described as Franciscus Petracchi (*filius*), or, in the common mouth, Petrarcha. Young Petrarch's father belonged, like Dante, to the party of the Whites; he suffered banishment at the same time as Dante, with accusation of having falsified a document, and was sentenced to a fine of a thousand lire, or loss of his right hand. Petrarch afterwards told

Florentine Petrarch.

Boccaccio that his father had friendly relations with Dante, and that he remembered how in his own childhood the great poet was once pointed out to him: the solemn figure of which when it went by was whispered, "See the man who has been in hell." Petrarch was born in camp before Florence on the night of a vain attempt of the Whites and the Ghibellines to get possession of the town. Petraccha's wife, like Dante's, had leave to remain in her own country; and she went to an estate of her husband's at Ancisa with the seven months' child, who was carried by a horseman in a bundle at the end of a stick, and almost drowned at the crossing of a river. It was probably at Ancisa that Francis Petrarch's younger brother was born, the pious Gerard, who survived him. Petrarch's father, like Dante, a wanderer, was rejoined by his family at Pisa in 1308, but they dwelt there only for a year. In 1313 the family went with many other Italians to Avignon, where for the last four years the Papal court had been established.

The small county of Venaissin, consisting of Avignon and the country around it, had formed part of the large possessions of Alphonso and Jeanne of Toulouse, which, on their death without heirs, were, in the reign of Philip III. of France, united to the French monarchy, according to the terms of a treaty with Raymond VII. But by that agreement little Venaissin, and its city of Avignon, were to be ceded to the Pope when the rest fell to France; and this part of Provence, therefore, remained subject to the See of Rome from Philip III.'s time even to the date of the Revolution of 1789. Philip IV. (le Bel), after his impassioned struggle with Pope Boniface VIII. for the right to include the French clergy among his taxable subjects, and for full temporal supremacy in his own kingdom, when the brief rule of that bold priest's successor had come to a sudden close, had so many partisans in the conclave that he could make whom he would Pope. So he gave the Papacy to his

own Archbishop of Bordeaux, as Clement V., on conditions —of which one was that, after his coronation in France, he should remove the Papal court to the Pope's French city of Avignon. The court brought with it a cloud of followers, and so raised the price of food and lodging in the town, by sudden increase to its population, that Petraccha the father, who was one of the new comers, sent his wife and sons to lodge in the neighbouring village of Carpentras. In that village were other Italians, and among them a good old Tuscan schoolmaster, Convenevole of Prato, a whetstone not sharp, though a sharpener of other wits. He had profound knowledge of all he had to teach, but he throve ill; for he began and left unfinished many things; he wasted time in writing Latin poetry of little worth, he borrowed of Petrarch money and books—the money he spent, the books he mislaid, and at last, tempted by poverty, he sold. Poverty then drove him back to his own town, where at last he died, honoured as a poet by his fellow-citizens, who applied to Petrarch, at Vaucluse, to write his epitaph.

Without devoting himself to any special occupation in life, Petrarch studied the ancient literature of Italy with patriotic ardour. The old orators, philosophers, and poets were his countrymen of past years, living again for him in their writings, and so real to him that he amused himself by writing letters to his most familiar acquaintances among them. Constantly in after-life Petrarch applied to the Italy of his own day judgments and aspirations based upon the standard supplied by the ancient world. He says that, when a child, he delighted in hearing the mere ring of the words of Cicero before he knew their meaning. Cicero and Virgil, afterwards Seneca, with Livy and other Roman historians, were his choicest reading, and he held the writing of his own time in but light esteem. He studied law at the Universities, but said that he learnt nothing useful that he could not find in Cicero or Seneca, and that he should not

practise an art in which he would not do what was dishonest, and could not do what was honest without seeming to be ignorant of his business. He went to study at Montpellier when about fourteen years old, and stayed there four years. When his father found him, to the neglect of other studies, collecting MSS. of works of the ancients, he flung them into the fire; but, seeing his distress, plucked from the flames, laughing, a Cicero and a Virgil, for his use in the rare hours of relaxation. To the last Petrarch was a diligent and successful seeker of manuscripts. He it was who discovered in a church at Verona Cicero's letters "Ad Familiares;" and he once possessed, but afterwards lost, Cicero's lost work on Glory. From Montpellier he went to Bologna, where he was taught law for three years more. Then the death of his father, about the year 1326, gave Petrarch liberty to follow his own inclination.

He went back to Avignon, where soon afterwards his mother died, and a dishonest executor robbed the two youths, Petrarch and his brother Gerard, of their inheritance. Thus they were driven to look to the Church for a subsistence, and received strong help from the powerful Ghibelline house of Colonna, which had been plundered and persecuted by Pope Boniface VIII., after whose death their dignities and many of their estates were restored to them. The chief of the house, Stefano, was in Rome; two of his brothers were Cardinals at Avignon, and one of his sons had studied with Petrarch at Bologna. The young Colonna did not then make Petrarch's acquaintance; but when he also came to Avignon, and was there made, in spite of his youth, Bishop of Lombès, Petrarch's wit and genius attracted him. Therefore, in 1330, the young bishop and the young poet set off with two other excellent youths (one skilled in poetry, the other in music) to the bishopric of Lombès, at the foot of the Pyrenees, where Petrarch spent what he himself called the happiest summer of his

life. When they came back to Avignon, the bishop introduced his friend to his uncles and brothers; and in the house of Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, Petrarch became so trusted a friend that one day when, upon the merits of some matter in dispute, an oath was required from all in the household, including even a brother of the Cardinal, and Petrarch also stood forward, his simple word was taken as sufficient.

Petrarch says that he first saw Laura on Good Friday in the year 1327, his age then being twenty-three. In 1333, to satisfy the young desire for change of scene that he says was strong in him, Petrarch undertook a journey through France, the Low Countries, and Germany; stayed some time in Paris; then went by Ghent, through Flanders and Brabant, to Lüttich, where he discovered two orations of Cicero, but hardly in the whole town yellow ink enough wherewith to copy them. At Aix-la-Chapelle it vexed him to hear men comparing Charlemagne with Pompey and Alexander. From Cologne he went over the Ardennes to Lyons, whence he took ship back to Avignon. In 1335 he received a canonry in Lombès; and about this time his friend Jacopo Colonna wrote to him of the Laura whom he had already been celebrating in sonnets, that many believed her to be a work of his imagination, and that his love was the Laurea (the laurel crown), for which he laboured.

Towards the end of 1336 Petrarch went to see his friends in Rome, where he gloried in monuments of the past, and whence he addressed a second poetical exhortation to Pope Benedict XII.—who was building a Papal palace at Avignon—to return to his true capital. By a wide sea-route, that brought him near the English coast, he had returned to Avignon in August, 1337; and in that year, in Vaucluse, about three miles out of town, he bought for his home a cottage with two little gardens—one by the falls of the Sorgue, the other in an island of the river. Here

he had his books, and ate the fish and fruit of the valley, with a fisherman who lived in a neighbouring cottage for his only servant. In the same year a son, who lived to the age of twenty-four, much troubling him, was born to Petrarch. The son's unknown mother was probably also the mother of his daughter Francesca, who survived him. The relation to which he owed these children, at a time when he was idealising love in the name of Laura, was to him a perfectly natural and honest one, the priest's equivalent for marriage, and he makes no reference to it in the strict account of his misdeeds that he has left behind him.

Petrarch retired to Vaucluse, already a poet of wide fame, resenting the corruption of the Papal court at Avignon. At Vaucluse the best part of his work in life was done. Here he wrote the greater number of his twelve Latin allegorical eclogues, of which the sixth and seventh are bitter satires against the Papal chair, and the twelfth is on the contest between English Edward III. and John of France. Here, too, he wrote many of his Latin metrical letters; also his two books in Latin upon Solitary Life, addressed to the only friend who was at home with him in the simplicities of life at Vaucluse, the bishop of the small neighbouring town of Cavaillon. Here he began his large enterprise of a History of Rome from Romulus to Trajan, of which the fragment remains as re-cast by him into thirty-one Latin Lives of Illustrious Men, Romulus being the first of them, and Julius Cæsar the last in the series. He wrote also in Latin four books of "Memorable Things," a collection of anecdotes and interesting words or deeds of famous men, classified in each chapter—as, first, Romans; then Externs (that is to say, Greeks or barbarians); and, lastly, moderns.

Wandering one Good Friday among the mountains of Vaucluse, it occurred to him, says Petrarch, to make the deeds of the elder Scipio, a favourite hero of his boyhood, the subject of an epic poem. No MS. of Silius Italicus

had then been discovered, and the work seemed to him unattempted, save by Ennius. So he began at Vaucluse his "Africa," and worked at it with zeal, leaving, however, its number of nine books to be completed in 1342. In the two first books Petrarch, after invocation of Christ and dedication to King Robert, makes the ghost of Publius Scipio tell his son in a dream the events of the Spanish war, adding prophecy of his success in Africa, and of the future of Rome. The third book tells the origin of Carthage, and that also of Rome, as recounted by Lælius, Scipio's ambassador to Syphax. In the fifth canto we are in the midst of war, Syphax is vanquished, and we are told the fate of Sophonisba; in the sixth book Hannibal returns from Italy; the seventh contains the battle of Zama; the eighth, a Carthaginian embassy to Rome and peace established; the ninth, Scipio's return and triumph. On the return Ennius is made to inform Scipio that Homer has appeared to him in a dream, and, while bidding him sing of Scipio, has told him that, after three hundred lustres, a youth named Franciscus, in a closed valley, sitting under laurel, should sing Scipio's deeds and the story of the Romans, in a poem called "Africa." And when, in the poem, Scipio is taken in triumph to the Capitol, Petrarch remembers that he also was taken up thither in triumph to receive a laurel crown. Petrarch never perfected his "Africa," and therefore kept it jealously from sight. It was magnified as an unknown wonder; and after his death there was doubt whether he had not fulfilled his threat that he should burn it for its incompleteness.

It was before writing the last books of his "Africa," on the 1st of September, 1340, that Petrarch at Vaucluse received in the morning a letter from the Roman Senate, calling him to receive the crown at Rome as Poet Laureate. On the same evening arrived a summons from the Florentine Robert de' Bardi, who was Chancellor

Petrarch Laureate.

of the Paris University, bidding him come to receive at Paris a like honour. Tradition of the Middle Ages held that Virgil, Horace, and Statius had been so crowned, and that this was a custom dropped out of use by decay of the Roman empire, but which had been revived in the thirteenth century. Petrarch, who had used all his interest, and whom it had cost much trouble to attain this object of his ambition, professed that he must prove his right to be crowned in the Roman Capitol by submitting himself to the examination of the learned King Robert of Naples. For two or three weeks, therefore, he was in the king's society at Naples, and it was then that King Robert requested the dedication to himself of Petrarch's "Africa." A day of public trial was appointed, and this trial was continued through a second and a third day, at the end of which King Robert declared Petrarch worthy of the laurel crown. He went then to receive it, in a robe which the king had furnished him, and the ceremony was performed on the 8th of April, the first day of Easter, in the year 1341. Petrarch delivered a short discourse on a text from Virgil, after which a senator made a speech, and placed, with applause of the crowd, the laurel crown upon the poet's head. The old Stefano Colonna then delivered a eulogy, and the company proceeded to the cathedral, where the poet caused his crown to be hung on the altar. A document was finally presented to him, certifying that he had been crowned Laureate as Poet and Historian, and that he was made a citizen of Rome. Thus Petrarch first gave life to the office of Poet Laureate.

Friendly business presently detained the laureate in Parma, whither he returned, and where he bought and rebuilt a house that is yet standing. In 1342 the Pope rewarded one of his poems with the Priory of Migliarino, in the diocese of Pisa. In the same year his brother Gerard became a Carthusian, and retired to a house in the wild

region of Montrieu. Petrarch was now living partly in Avignon, partly in Vaucluse, where he was again active in song about Laura; and this was about the time of the birth of his daughter Francesca. In the year following, Petrarch wrote the three books on "Contempt of the World," which he himself called "Secretum Suum;" wherein he tells that there came to him a heavenly lady, Truth, in a vision, with Saint Augustine, and that the lady bade Augustine instruct him concerning his misdeeds, whereupon arose dialogue for three days in the presence of Truth. In the first day, or book, Augustine shows that man is the cause of his own sorrows, and that the desire to be free from them is effectual only when it destroys all earthly passion. In the other two books the saint deals with Petrarch personally, discussing in the second his avidity of praise, desire of earthly wealth, anger, distaste for life, and so forth; and in the third, with much particular confession of fault by the poet, in love and ambition, but, as has been said, with no hint of discredit in his relations to the mother of his son and daughter.

Petrarch learnt also a little Greek from the Greek Barlaam, who was at this time in Avignon; but though he possessed Greek MSS., he could not read them without Latin gloss, and begged of Boccaccio a Latin translation of Homer, which Boccaccio sent to him in 1361. There were, according to a letter of Petrarch's, at that time in Florence and Pisa but four or five men who cared to know anything of Greek—one in Bologna, one in Sulmona (the birthplace of Ovid), but in Rome not one.

At the end of 1343 his friend King Robert's death caused Petrarch to be sent on a political errand to Naples, but he achieved nothing, and left in disgust a city whose young nobles were of roughest manners, and where real fights of gladiators were held for the entertainment of the court and people. It was after leaving Naples, when, at Parma, he saw all North Italy confusedly in arms, that

Petrarch wrote, as a patriot, the canzone "Italia Mia." In the winter of 1345 he was again at Avignon, writing a friendly letter to Cicero. Pope Clement VI. would have made him his secretary, but he preferred leisure and independence. Neither would Petrarch accept any office involving care of souls. He had trouble enough, he said, with the care of his own soul. But he accepted a canonry at Parma, and, after visiting his brother in his monastery, wrote two books, "De Otio Religiosorum."

In May, 1347, Cola Rienzi, whom Petrarch had known when he came with a Roman embassy to the Pope at Avignon, suddenly became master of Rome as tribune of the people. Petrarch, a fearless and enthusiastic patriot, throbbed then with a hope that Rome would be again a worthy Queen of Italy, and wrote in warm sympathy to Rienzi and to the Roman people, denouncing the fallen nobility as tyrants and robbers, that were not even Italian, but bred by the Rhine and Rhone. In Rienzi he saw a new Romulus, a third Brutus, and promised him the celebrations of his verse. When Rienzi summoned the Pope back to Rome, his messenger was waylaid on the road to Avignon, and his letters were torn. The indignant Petrarch wrote to Rienzi exhortations that he should not suffer this wrong to pass unpunished. At open war now with the opinion of Papal Avignon, Petrarch returned to Italy. When he reached Genoa he found reason to write to Rienzi in a fellow-patriot's tone of admonition and reproach. At Parma he heard of the downfall of the tribune, whom the people had deserted. The Colonnas, too, were fallen. "No other ruling family on earth is dearer to me," said Petrarch; "but dearer to me is the public, dearer is Rome, dearer is Italy."

In 1347 Petrarch was at Padua, where he received a canonry from Jacopo da Carrara. He then lived sometimes in Padua, sometimes in Parma or Verona. In Parma,

in 1350, he was made an archdeacon. He was at Verona and also at Parma in 1348, the year of the Black Death in Italy and France, that spread in the two following years through other lands, and was preceded by a dreadful earthquake in North Italy. A hundred and twenty thousand are said to have perished in three months in over-crowded Avignon. That plague-year, 1348, was the year of the death of Laura. She died on the 6th of April, and on the 19th of May Petrarch heard of her death at Parma, whither he had brought his son to be taught by Gilbert the grammarian. Grief for the death of Laura is expressed in the second part of the "Trionfi." Boccaccio, who is the oldest good authority concerning Petrarch, believed, with his friend Jacopo Colonna, that Laura was only an allegory for the poet's Laurel.

Petrarch's Laura.

The first mention of Laura as a real person is by an anonymous writer, quoted in Professor Marsand's "Biblioteca Petrarchesca," who says that Laura was a maiden whom Petrarch loved, but whom he would not marry, though Pope Urban V. (not Pope till after Laura's death) desired to give her to him for wife. This story is repeated by Squarciafico, with the substitution of a possible Pope's name, and the addition that, as Petrarch would not marry her, she married somebody else. That is the whole testimony of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the actual existence of a Laura. In the year 1520 Alessandro Vellatello, who was twice in Avignon, pronounced some local traditions as to the family of Laura to be clearly false; and professed to have examined the church-registers of Cabrières, near Vaucluse, where he said he had seen that Laura, daughter of Henri de Chiaban, was born there in 1314. Here therefore, he argued, we have the Laura of Petrarch. It was shown afterwards that there were no baptismal registers so old as 1314, and that no family named Chiaban ever lived in those parts;

whereupon the local tradition set aside by Vellatello was revived, and Laura was said to have been of the noble family of De Sade. At last an Abbé de Sade, ambitious to confirm to his family the honour of numbering Petrarch's Laura with its ancestors, made out his case on behalf of a daughter of Audibert de Noves, named Laurette de Noves, who in 1325, in her eighteenth year, two years before Petrarch first saw her, married Hugues de Sade, then aged twenty; became the mother of eleven children, seven sons and four daughters; and made her will on the 3rd of April, 1348. The De Sades were one of the chief families of Avignon in Petrarch's time. This theory of the identification of a lady to whom Petrarch may have paid homage has since been generally received; but it has been disputed by Lord Woodhouselee and Professor Marsand, who argue that Laura must have died unmarried. In either case, and whoever may have been the lady Petrarch complimented by association with his verse, she could have borne in it no other name than Laura. But if her real name also was Laura, that accident may have helped to obtain for her the poet's show of homage. Such homage was conventional. So far, indeed, were the poets of those days from looking for a personal and literal interpretation of the customary variations on the proper theme of courtly song that, as Dante never sang to the world his love for wife or mother, and as Petrarch never addressed a line in public to the mother of his children,—so also, throughout the singing of their time, the public homage to a fair lady by any courtly poet seems to have implied usually or always, not that there were, but that there were not, private relations of familiar love between them.

In the autumn of 1350 Petrarch, on his way to Rome, first visited the Florence from which his father had been exiled. Thence Boccaccio, who had long admired his genius, sent forward a Latin poem

Petrarch's first meeting with Boccaccio.

to welcome him; then came himself to meet him, took him to his house, and established a friendship that continued to the end of Petrarch's life. On his return he was received with triumph at Arezzo, where the people showed him the house in which he had been born, and which the owner had not been permitted to enlarge or alter. He visited different towns of North Italy. In 1351 he was at Padua, burning more than a thousand of his own Latin poems and letters, and arranging those which he thought worthy to survive him in three books of Poems, fourteen books of Letters to friends, and one to illustrious ancients, Cicero, for example, or Quintilian. There, too, he received from Florence, by the hand of Boccaccio, a solemn gift of his paternal estates, which the Republic had bought; and he was invited to Florence, to give life there to the three-year-old University. But, although he answered with the compliments of a pleased man, he never went again to Florence, and the vexed Florentines took back their gift; for Petrarch returned to Vaucluse.

In December, 1352, Clement VI. died, and was succeeded by Pope Innocent VI., who believed Petrarch, because he read Virgil, to be a conjuror. In the following spring the poet left Vaucluse for ever. He went to Milan, and for the next ten years dwelt there in a small town-house, or at a pleasant country retreat, living simply, sleeping little, and, as a poet and scholar, labouring incessantly with book and pen. He was flattered at Milan by that city's temporal and spiritual chief, Giovanni de' Visconti. Boccaccio warmly reproved his friend, a Florentine, for giving up his genius and liberty to an enemy of his country, whom he had himself called a cruel Polyphemus. But Petrarch gave up no liberty. He went in 1353 as Orator to the Doge Andrea Dandolo, commissioned to establish peace, if it might be, between Genoa and Venice. In the year following, Giovanni Visconti died,

Return to Italy.

and was succeeded by three violent nephews, who held rule in common. They all honoured Petrarch, and Petrarch was godfather to one of their sons. When the Emperor Charles IV. came through Italy on his way to Rome, Petrarch, who had hoped that an emperor might bring Italy peace, and who had written to the emperor in that sense even from Vaucluse, was invited to meet him at Mantua. And there the emperor retained the poet eight days in his company, caused him to tell the story of his life, argued with him on the comparative advantages of active and solitary life, begged that he would dedicate to him his work on illustrious men, and conducted him on his way back beyond Piacenza. But the emperor disappointed Petrarch's hopes, and in a bold letter, that was taken in good part, the poet told him so. In 1355 Petrarch was sent on a mission to the emperor, who was rumoured to be meditating evil against Milan. He waited for him at Basle, went to him at Prague, and received from him the diploma of Count Palatine.

Between 1358 and 1360 Petrarch was writing, for an exiled and unhappy ruler of Parma, consolations of philosophy in two books, "De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ," which have been translated into many languages. In March, 1359, Boccaccio visited him, stayed for some days at his small country retreat of Garignano, near Milan, and on his return to Florence sent him a copy of Dante. Towards the end of this year Petrarch gave up his town-house (in which he had been robbed, as it seemed, by his reprobate son, who then lived with him), and went to lodge in the Monastery of San Simpliciano. In the next year Petrarch represented the house of Visconti at the court of King John of France, returned from his captivity in England—King John's daughter, aged eleven, having been sold in marriage to the eight-year-old son of one of the Visconti for a large sum, which would contribute to the payment of the ransom.

After the marriage ceremonies Petrarch went, at the end of the year 1360, to Paris. But France was then wasted with war and pestilence, and he refused the royal invitation to remain, as well as invitations from the emperor, who sent him a gold cup. In the middle of 1361 Petrarch left Milan, whither, after the peace between England and France, disbanded soldiers brought turmoil, and were thought to have brought also the pestilence of which Petrarch's graceless son John died, when he was giving promise of a better future. The poet then removed to Padua, where he married his daughter Francesca to a Milanese gentleman, who lived happily with her in her father's house. Danger of plague, however, caused Petrarch in the summer of 1362 to remove to Venice, taking his books with him, which he was resolved to give to the Venetian Republic as the foundation of a public library. The senate accepted his offer, and granted for Petrarch and his books a palace with two corner towers, which he was to occupy for life. Afterwards, when the books were dedicated to St. Mark, they went into Church custody and rotted.

Here in Venice Petrarch saw for the last time, in the summer of 1363, his friend Boccaccio, who came from Naples, and was for three months his guest. Petrarch continued to live in Venice, making in summer frequent trips to Milan and Padua. In 1368 he sat with the princes at the marriage of Galeazzo Visconti's daughter with Edward III.'s son, Lionel Duke of Clarence. In 1366, having hope of Pope Urban V., Petrarch wrote to him, warmly urging his return to Rome; in the year following Urban did go to Rome, and received the congratulations of the poet; but in 1370 his Holiness returned to Avignon, where, in the same year, he died. Petrarch in urging the Pope Romeward had attacked the French, and the taste of the Cardinals for the French wine. This brought on him, after the Pope's death,

a bitter censure, to which he bitterly replied in 1371, "Contra cujusdam anonymi Galli calumnias."

At that time this second patriarch of modern literature, who had been for a year or two at Padua in feeble health, lived in a house that he had built two miles out of town, in the village of Arqua, on the southern slope of the Euganean Hills. This—with a period of residence as canon in Padua, from the middle of November, at least, until January—was Petrarch's home at the time of Chaucer's first visit to Italy in 1372–3. He had removed to it in 1370, and there, subject to sudden fainting fits and attacks of fever, he lived chiefly on bread, water, and fruit; took only bread and water on Fridays; fasted often, and slept little. He had with him his daughter and son-in-law, with their family. His favourite little grandson Francesco, who had been thought the image of himself, was dead. He kept at least two horses, had an old chaplain, a household of domestics, and five or six copyists when he could get them. His income was from his benefices in the Church, of which the archdeaconry of Milan and the canonry in Padua were the most lucrative, especially when he was in residence at Padua, where it is more probable than improbable that Chaucer saw and spoke with him. Petrarch tells us in his "Letter to Posterity" that his hair had begun to turn grey at the age of five-and-twenty, and that after the age of sixty, when he was white-haired and partly bald, he wore spectacles, and that he then concerned himself more with history and religion than with poetry. Of his two last treatises, one was "On Ignorance of Oneself and of Many Things," showing the vanity of philosophy, on occasion of a vote, that Francis Petrarch was a good but ignorant man, passed by four young Venetians, when there was a fashion in Venice for glorifying even above Christianity the Commentary of Averroës on Aristotle. The other work was a small treatise, "On the Best Administration of

Petrarch at Padua.

a State," written for his friend and patron Francesco da Carrara. To make peace for that friend with victorious Venice, Petrarch went to Venice late in September, 1373, but was too weak to address the senators until after a day's rest. When he came home he read for the first time his friend Boccaccio's "Decameron," and liked the last novel so well—the tale of Patient Griselda, which, he said, none had been able to read without tears—that he translated it into Latin as "De Obedientia et Fide Uxoria, Mythologia," and sent the translation to his friend with the last letter he ever wrote. As this was after Chaucer's return from Italy, there can be no recollection of having had the tale from Petrarch's living voice inferred from the lines by which it is introduced among the "Canterbury Tales." "Farewell friends, farewell letters," are the closing words of that last letter of Petrarch's, and a few weeks afterwards he died, on the 18th of July, 1374, two days short of the age of seventy-one.

The other patriarch of modern literature, Boccaccio (born in 1313), was nine years younger than his friend Petrarch, whom he survived only by a year. It may be said again that both were born during the lifetime of Dante —Petrarch being a youth of seventeen, and Boccaccio a boy of eight, in the year when Dante died, a man of fifty-six.

Boccaccio.

Giovanni Boccaccio was the son of a Florentine merchant. His mother was a Parisian, and his father had lived for a time in Paris. Finding him too studious to be a merchant, his father desired that he should study canon law; he tried to do so, but his bent was in a different direction. He learnt Greek, and partly earned his livelihood as a Greek copyist. He wrote Latin expositions of ancient geography, mythology, and history. Then he gave play to his fancy in his mother tongue, and wrote prose and verse, in which are the first known examples of *ottava rima*. He never married; nor was he, like Petrarch, a Churchman who

might be enriched with benefices. Except that he was sometimes sent by Florence upon embassies, and that two years before his death at Castaldo, in 1375, he was appointed to deliver yearly lectures upon the Divine Comedy of Dante, he held no public appointment, and he had no great man for patron.

Those of his works which influenced the course of English literature will be spoken of hereafter in connection with the writings they helped to suggest. Now, therefore, it is enough to say that Boccaccio's Latin works were—"A Genealogy of the Gods," in fifteen books; "On the Falls of Illustrious Men and Women," in nine books; a work "On Illustrious Women;" and a geographical work "On the Names of Mountains, Woods, etc." In Latin verse he imitated the Eclogues of Virgil. In Italian are his poems; his romances; his "Decameron," of potent literary influence; his "Life of Dante," with a commentary on the first sixteen cantos of the "Inferno;" and a few letters.

Boccaccio's "Decameron."

The terrible Black Death of 1348 had spread over Asia from the extreme East to the Bosphorus before it entered Europe by way of commercial Florence (for which reason it was also called by historians the Plague of Florence), and thence spread over Europe. The scourge was renewed three times in the same century—in 1360, 1373, and 1382. When this most fatal of all plagues in human history was, in 1348, raging in Florence, Boccaccio feigns that seven fair ladies, who met in the church of Santa Maria Novella, after discourse together, agreed to take refuge two miles from the town in a delicious country house surrounded by a bright garden. As they would need protectors, they took with them three young men, lovers of some, cousins or friends of the rest. In their gay retreat, when during the heat of the day they lay on the grass under the trees, the ladies and gentlemen told stories to one another. Every day had in

turn, one of the ten who was director of the entertainments and of the order of the story-telling. Under government, therefore, of one of the ten persons of the story, was each day of the ten-day period, or "Decameron." On each day ten stories were told. And so, as he had brought into use the *ottava rima* and the custom of writing prose pastorals mixed with eclogues in verse, Boccaccio, by telling in this manner a hundred favourite stories with a charm never before given to the common speech, gave currency in Europe to the Eastern custom of connecting tales together by some thread of invention.

Of his poems, the "Teseide" (source of Chaucer's "Knight's Tale") is a tale in octave rhyme, the first of its kind.

His poems and romances.

His "Filostrato" (source of Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida"), in the same measure, tells the love of the Trojan Troilus for Cressida. Troilus is entitled Filostrate, as a soldier in Love's service, or one vanquished by the joys and pains of love. Boccaccio's "Ninfale Fiesolano," or sport of the nymphs of Fiesole, and "L'Amorosa Visione," are of less mark; but his pastoral poem of "Admetus," mingling verse and prose ("L'Ameto, Commedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine"), full of local allusion and rural scenery, is the first of its kind in modern literature. Boccaccio wrote also sonnets and canzoni; but he set no great value on his rhymes. He preferred the graceful prose form into which he cast his romances, "Il Filocopo," "L'Amorosa Fiammetta" (in whom he is fabled to have dwelt on a love of his own for a natural daughter of King Robert of Naples), and the "Labyrinth of Love," called also "Il Cortaccio," an allegorical vision, not flattering to fair women.

With these notes upon the new birth of literature in Italy, let us at once observe the connection of time in our chief contemporary English writers. Sir John Mandeville was of about the same

English and Italian contemporaries.

age as Petrarch, probably a little older, and the year of his death was about two years earlier than Petrarch's. The "Vision of Piers Plowman" was begun about twelve years before, and Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," work of his ripest years, not until twelve years after, the deaths of Petrarch and Boccaccio. John Wyclif, who was eleven years younger than Boccaccio, and whose execution and superintendence of our first complete translation of the Bible had occupied the last twenty-four years of his life, survived Boccaccio and Petrarch only by about ten years.

CHAPTER III.

RICHARD OF BURY AND SOME LEARNED MEN.

PETRARCH says, in a letter about the Thule of the ancients, "I had no idle discourse on this matter with Richard, formerly the King of England's Chancellor, a man of ardent character, not ignorant of literature, and who, as he was born and bred in Britain, and was from his youth up curious beyond belief in hidden things, seemed most apt for the disentangling of especially such little questions. But he, either because he so believed, or because he was ashamed to confess ignorance, or perhaps, which I do not suspect, because he grudged me the knowledge of this mystery, answered that he certainly would satisfy my doubts, but not till he had returned home to his books, of which nobody had a greater plenty. For when I chanced to get his friendship he was a traveller transacting his lord's business at the Apostolic See—namely, at that time when the first seeds of a long war between his lord and the King of France were sprouting, afterwards to yield a bloody harvest. Nor are the sickles laid aside yet, or the garners closed. But when this promiser of mine had departed, either finding nothing, or distracted by the weighty discharge of his duty in respect of the Papal injunctions, though often questioned by letters, he has satisfied my expectation no otherwise than by an obstinate silence. And so British friendship has given me none the more knowledge of Thule."* Petrarch's

Richard of Bury.

* Petrarch, "Epist. de Rebus Familiaribus," lib. iii. ep. 1, "Opera ed. Basil" (1554), p. 673-4.

British friend with the great plenty of books was Richard Aungervyle, commonly called Richard of Bury; and he pleasantly stands at the head of the roll of our modern writers with a zealous treatise on the Love and the Right Use of Books.

He was born in the year 1281,* at Bury St. Edmunds, in the county of Suffolk. His father was a Norman knight, who died in middle life, and left him to the care of his maternal uncles, who were of the family of Willoughby. They sent him to continue his studies at Oxford, where he distinguished himself so much by his acquirements in philosophy and divinity that he was selected by the king as tutor to Prince Edward, afterwards King Edward III. In that office Richard of Bury preserved at court for some time a prudent silence between conflicting parties, while he won the hearty goodwill of his pupil. But when the time came for safe and energetic action in his pupil's interests, he made his worldly fortune by proving himself a devoted follower of the young prince and his mother.

Richard Aungervyle happened to be serving Edward II. as his Treasurer in Guienne, in 1325, when Queen Isabel betook herself to Paris. Isabel, daughter of that Philip the Fair of France who had brought the Popes to Avignon, had, seventeen years before 1325, been reported the most beautiful woman in Europe, when the weak King of England married her. The first rival she and England had in the king's affections was the favourite Gaveston. Grief then followed upon grief. While at home he was at odds with his barons, who had slain the favourite, King Edward was defeated by the Scots at Bannockburn. Ireland rebelled, too, but with less success. In England the people suffered heavily from pestilence and famine. The quarter of wheat rose to ten times its usual value. The poor fed upon roots, horses, dogs, rats—nay, it is said even sometimes on their

* M. Cocheris says 1287.

own dead. Of want came robbery; and there were so many hordes of robbers that the men who were not thieves joined in bands that went out to do battle with those who were. The triumphant Scots poured in over the border, and even laid successful siege to Berwick. In Hugh de Spenser the weak king presently found another favourite, and this provoked his barons to a fresh rebellion. Though not victorious, the party of Lancaster, identified by the people with their own interests, retained its strength; and it was between factions at court thus fiercely antagonist that Richard of Bury, as the tutor of the Prince of Wales, had to maintain prudent reserve. In 1322 the king was so far master of all but himself that he sent Thomas Earl of Lancaster to execution; but the people of England flocked to his grave as to that of a saint and martyr, until a party of Gascons were there stationed to deny them access. Thirty of his chief adherents were hanged, and the De Spensers, father and son, presently offended the Church by seizing the temporalities of four Lancastrian bishops. Among the barons imprisoned was Roger Lord Mortimer of Wigmore, who broke out of the Tower and escaped to France. To his prompting probably was due the sudden quarrel forced upon Edward II. by his wife's brother, Charles the Fair of France. The quarrel was raised chiefly on the plea that King Edward had not attended Charles's coronation, or done fitting homage for Guienne. Queen Isabel, who was embroiled with the favourite De Spenser, then joined in a plot for the interests of her son against those of her husband; and to this plot Richard of Bury, her son's tutor, was actively a party.

It was suggested that if Queen Isabel went to Paris as negotiator, the King of France would, for the arrangement of disputes with the King of England, concede favourable terms to his own sister. Isabel was sent, therefore, with a splendid retinue; and on her arrival in Paris, Richard of

Bury, the King's Treasurer in Guienne, gave her the money he had been collecting in that province. Edward's lieutenant in Guienne sent twenty-four Lancers to arrest the disloyal Treasurer, and he was pursued by them to the very gates of Paris, where he fled for refuge to the campanile of the Franciscans.

Queen Isabel made terms humiliating to her husband. France added the suggestion that if Guienne were given to the Prince of Wales, Richard of Bury's pupil, the homage of the Prince of Wales would be accepted in lieu of that due from the King of England. The De Spensers, Hugh and his father, counselled Edward II. to assent to this, for they dared neither go to France with the king, nor be in England while he was absent. Prince Edward went, therefore, to France as Lord of Guienne; and, when there, remained with his mother, who had made Mortimer steward of her household and refused for the present to return to England. Richard of Bury stayed also with Queen Isabel, attached to the service of her son, his pupil.

When the mother and son did return, it was with an army of invaders that landed at Orwell, in Suffolk, towards the close of September, 1326. Their army was joined by both Lancastrians and Royalists, Isabel being supposed to mean only the removal of the favourite Hugh de Spenser, who was denounced by proclamation, issued in the name of the queen, the prince, and the Earl of Kent, as "the manifest tyrant and enemy of God, of holy Church, and of our very dear lord the king, and of all the realm." King Edward fled to Wales. Old De Spenser, besieged by the queen in Bristol, was taken, embowelled, and hanged, at the age of ninety. Henry of Lancaster, the brother of the executed Thomas, pursued Hugh de Spenser, who, when taken, was crowned with nettles and hanged on a high gallows at Hereford. By the next Parliament that met, Edward II. was deposed; and so in January the prince, whom Richard

Aungervyle had sedulously served, became—early in his fifteenth year—Edward III. Eight months later the deposed king was murdered in Berkeley Castle by two of his keepers, his son ruling at that time under the control of Isabel and Mortimer. Mortimer's head was turned by his success, and he disdained the Earl of Lancaster, who was the young king's legal guardian. But about three years later Mortimer was seized by lords who had in their company the young Edward himself, resolved to break free from dictation. Mortimer then was impeached, and on a November day in the year 1330 was hanged at Tyburn as a traitor.

These changes did not affect Richard de Bury's fortunes. Whether the influence was paramount of Isabel and Mortimer, or of the king himself, the scholar prospered in his pupil's reign. Immediately after the accession of Edward III. he was appointed Steward of the Palace and Treasurer of the Wardrobe, which office he resigned in September, 1329,* on being made Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. In 1330 he was sent as ambassador to Pope John XXII. at Avignon; and it was then that he met Petrarch, who afterwards corresponded with him as a friend. The king's letter of introduction commended him to the Pope's favour as one who had bestowed assiduous care on Edward himself from his childhood, and for whom, as for one whose well-being he strongly desired, the king of England asked of his Holiness the benefices in the Pope's gift at Hereford, London, and Chichester, which had been held by a deceased archdeacon of Northampton. "For," said the letter, "Richard de Bury was a man whom the king knew to be "forecasting in counsel, worthy for his purity of life and conversation, stored with knowledge of literature, and circum-

* An inventory of Edward III.'s crown jewels, made by Richard de Bury on resigning his care of the wardrobe, is printed in vol. x. of the "Archæologia."

spect in all affairs of business.'" Richard Aungervyle made costly appearance as ambassador of England, with a following of twenty clerks and thirty-six equerries. His audience with the Vicar of Christ cost him five thousand marks, for it was useless to go to his Holiness on any business unless one could, as Walter Map had said, "box his ears with a purse." The king's business having been settled to the king's wish, Richard de Bury was named chaplain to the Pope, and promise was made to him of the first bishopric vacant in England.

The first bishopric vacant after Aungervyle's return was that of Durham. Elections were legally free, and the Prior and Chapter of Durham, perhaps ignorant of the king's wish, chose for their bishop Robert de Graystanes, Doctor of Theology and Sub-prior. The Archbishop of York signified assent to their choice, and Robert de Graystanes, as bishop-elect, presented himself to the king. Then he was told that the Pope had intended the bishopric for Richard de Bury, that the king would not contradict the Pope's choice, and that he refused therefore to confirm the election. The spirit of Grosseteste still lived in the English Church, resisting the Pope's interference in the distribution of the English benefices. Robert de Graystanes held by his lawful right, and lost no time in its assertion by procuring his own consecration at York, followed by installation at Durham, and reception at Durham, as Lord Bishop, of the oath of fealty from the vassals of the See. That done, he went to Edward for his temporalities; but the indignant king refused to see him. On his return to Durham, Robert found the clerks of Richard de Bury in possession of his episcopal throne. Further contest was considered hopeless, and the Archbishop of York was obliged to annul the election of the Chapter, and absolve the Durham people from their oath of fealty. Robert de Graystanes then retired from a contest in which he had not engaged from

Robert de Graystanes.

motives of personal ambition, but as an English Churchman resisting the right of the Pope to cancel by a word an election in complete accordance with the English law. He was distinctly on the right side of the question; and has left us a Chronicle* containing in its last two chapters his own history of the election, written without bitterness, but in a spirit like that by which Grosseteste had been animated in his struggle against Papal interference with the rights and privileges of the English clergy.

Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham.

Richard de Bury, who had not long before been appointed Treasurer of the kingdom, was consecrated Bishop of Durham by the Archbishop of Canterbury in December, 1333, and on the 5th of June next year installed by the Prior of Durham. He celebrated the occasion with a great feast, at which the young king and queen, the queen-mother Isabel, the King of Scotland, two archbishops, five bishops, and the great English and Scottish lords were present. The English and the Scots were then in contest, and their peaceful meeting at his installation in the frontier bishopric was a memorable honour to Richard of Durham. Before the end of the same year the new Bishop of Durham became Lord Chancellor, with the affairs of the Scots and of the French pressing upon his attention. When he returned the seals to the king, it was only to go abroad in his service as ambassador, that he might exercise his own trusted sagacity in carrying out the peaceful policy he had advised. He went to the court of Paris, to Flanders, Hainault, and Germany, and settled the terms of a treaty between the King of England and the Counts of Hainault and Namur, the Marquis of Juliers, and the Dukes of Brabant and Guelders. When he returned to Durham he was busy in procuring confirmation of the rights and privileges of his church. He

* "Historia de Statu Ecclesiæ Dunelmensis," published by the Surtees Society in "Historiæ Dunelmensis Scriptores" (1839).

assisted also, in 1337, as Commissioner of the Government at the assemblies held at York, Stamford, and Newcastle on-Tyne, to discuss Scottish affairs. When his desires of peace were frustrated, he closed his career as a statesman. He returned, however, himself to Paris, bearing a declaration of war, and then came back to his diocese, when the last public act of his life was, during the king's prosecution of the French war, to conclude a two years' truce with the encroaching Scots.

Thenceforth Richard de Bury lived retired among the books he loved, still drawing to himself as chaplains and companions the most learned English scholars of his time. To be his chaplain, and by scholarship to win the household affection of a man so influential with the king, was a step to promotion sure enough to satisfy ambitious minds; while life with Richard Aungervyle housed the scholar among books, and gave him hourly access to the best library in England. Among Richard of Durham's chaplains were Thomas Bradwardine, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; Robert Holcot; Richard Fitzraufe, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh; Richard Bentworth, afterwards Bishop of London; Walter Seagrave, afterwards Bishop of Chichester; John Manduit, astronomer; Richard Kilmington, theologian; and Walter Burley, a great Aristotelian, who dedicated to Richard de Bury his Commentaries upon the Politics and Ethics. The bishop is said to have made every week eight quarters of wheat into bread and given it to the poor, and to have regularly spent, in alms by the way, eight pounds when travelling between Durham and Newcastle; five pounds between Durham and Stockton, or Middleham; and five marks between Durham and Auckland.* His love for books was celebrated by him in the treatise entitled "Philobiblon," which he completed

* "Collectanea ad Statum Civilem et Ecclesiasticum Comitatus Dunelmensis," Darlington, no date (1774 ?).

only a little while before his death at the episcopal residence of Auckland on the 14th of April, 1345. Let the spirit of the book speak for its writer, in a miniature copy which ascribes to it no turn of thought or phrase that is not to be found in the original.

"*Philobiblon*"

consists of a Prologue and Twenty Chapters.

In the Prologue Richard of Bury, by Divine commiseration Bishop of Durham, greets his readers and expresses sympathy for good scholars whose study poverty impedes. The bent of his compassion has, he says, long disposed him to provide them with food and the use of books. For this purpose, acceptable to God, he has long been an ardent collector of books; and he now justifies his zeal, as he says [though later times condemn him in excess of rhetoric], in the lightest tyle of the moderns. For it is ridiculous in rhetoricians to use a grand style when light matter is discussed. Which treatise, he continues, will purge from excess the love we have had for books, will make manifest the purpose of our intent devotion, and will bring more clearly to light in twenty chapters the circumstances of what we have done. But because it is chiefly a dissertation on the love of books, it has pleased us, according to the custom of the ancient Latins, to name it friendly-wise by a Greek word—"Philobiblon."

The first chapter opens the subject by commending Wisdom, and books as the abode of Wisdom. In books, beyond a doubt, hast thou set thy desirable tabernacle, where the Most High established thee, the Light of Light, the Book of Life. For there all who seek thee, find thee; and to those who knock, it shall be quickly opened. In them the cherubim spread wide their wings, and the understandings of the students rise and look abroad from pole to pole, from the rising to the setting sun. Alexander, but for books, would have been without a memorial. The glory of the world would perish in oblivion if God had not provided mortals with the remedies of books. Towers crumble to the earth, but he whose book lives cannot die. And it is to be considered, lastly, what convenience of teaching is in books, how easily, how secretly, how safely in books we bare, without shame, the poverty of human ignorance. These are masters who instruct us without rods and cane, without words and wrath, and for no clothes or money. If you approach them they are not asleep, if you question them they are not secret, if you go astray they do not grumble at you; they know not how to laugh if you are ignorant. O books, ye only are liberal

and free who pay tribute to all who ask it, and enfranchise all who serve you faithfully!

In his second chapter Richard de Bury shows how books are to be preferred to wealth and fleshly luxuries. Artistotle asked why the ancients gave prizes for gymnastics and bodily contests, but never decreed any reward for wisdom. Which question he thus solved:—In gymnastic exercises the reward is better and more eligible than that for which it is given. But nothing can be better than wisdom; and, therefore, to wisdom there could be no prize assigned. Riches pertain to the aid of the body, books to the aid of the mind. Books declare and defend the Christian faith; and as books, which are truer counsellors than friends, are the most convenient masters, they deserve both love from us and magisterial honour.

The third chapter of "Philobiblon" argues that books ought always to be bought, whatever their cost, when there are means of paying for them; except in two cases—when they are knavishly over-charged, or when a better time for buying is expected. That sun of men, Solomon, bids us buy books readily and sell them unwillingly (Prov. xxiii.). "Buy the truth," he says, "and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." The bishop tells how the archphilosopher Aristotle, whom Averroës thinks to have been given as a sort of rule in nature, bought a few books of Speusippus after his death for 72,000 sesterces [three Attic talents, £731 5s.]. Plato, before him in time, but behind him in doctrine, bought three books of Philolaus, the Pythagorean, for 10,000 denarii [£354].* And then he reminds us of what Tarquin lost by grudging to pay for the books of the Sibyl.

The fourth chapter compares the degenerate clergy to the progeny of vipers that destroy their parents, or to the young cuckoo that slays its foster-mother. They sucked at the paps of grammar till they learned to speak the mighty deeds of God; they were clothed with philosophy, and winged for flight to the door whence bread of heaven is dispensed. Or do they say that they have no such gifts? Then they have lost them, or refused them from the first. Books gave them their place of trust as pastors of the flock upon diverging ways, that looks for guidance to their way and word, and that is held to recompense them with its milk and wool. They take the left-hand road; are spotted with thefts, homicides, and immodesties of many sorts; are given into the hands of justice, and the people cry of each offender, "Crucify him, crucify him! If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." "But then," say the books, "let the wretched man remember us, that he may escape the peril of

* "Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic." iii., c. xvii.

approaching death. We run out to meet the prodigal son.' The book not unknown is held out to be read, and, at a little reading of one stammering through fear, the power of the judge is dissolved, the accuser withdrawn, death put to flight. O precious reading of the psalter, that deserves henceforth from this itself to be called the Book of Life. Laymen must bear secular judgment, that sewn in sacks they may swim out to Neptune, or planted in the ground bear fruit to Pluto, or by the fire offer themselves as fat holocausts to Vulcan, or, at any rate, hang and become victims to Juno; whilst our pupil, at the reading of one Book of Life, is commended to the custody of the Pope, and rigour is changed into favour; so death is averted from the clerical nursling of books.

"Yet," complain books, "in these evil times we are cast out of our place in the inner chamber, turned out of doors, and our place taken by dogs, birds, and the two-legged beast called woman. But that beast has always been our rival, and when she spies us in a corner, with no better protection than the web of a dead spider, she drags us out with frown and violent speech, laughing us to scorn as useless, and soon counsel our being changed into costly head-gear, fine linen, silk and scarlet double dyed, dresses and divers trimmings, linens and woollens. And so," complain the books still, "we are turned out of our homes, our coats are torn from our backs, our backs and sides ache, we lie about disabled, our natural whiteness turned to yellow—without doubt, we have the jaundice. Some of us are gouty, witness our twisted extremities. Our bellies are griped and wrenched, and are consumed by worms; on each side the dirt cleaves to us, nobody binds up our wounds, we lie ragged, and weep in dark corners, or meet with Job upon a dunghill, or, as seems hardly fit to be said, we are hidden in the abysses of the sewers. We are sold also like slaves, and lie as unredeemed pledges in taverns. We are thrust into cruel butteries, to be cut up like sheep and cattle; committed to Jews, Saracens, heretics, and pagans, whom we always dread as the plague, and by whom some of our forefathers are known to have been poisoned. Our gentle birth is traduced daily; while wretched compilers, translators, and transformers impose on us authors' names as new. Ah, how often do you pretend that we who are old are just born, and call us sons who are fathers! How do we suffer from translators who presume to turn us from one language into another, not knowing the idiom of either! We are given up, lastly, to painters ignorant of letters, and consigned to goldsmiths, that we, who are the light of faithful souls, may become repositories of gold leaf, as if we were not the sacred vessels of wisdom. The ploughman respects his carts, his harrows, flails, and spades; the retired soldier honours his shield

and sword; only the ungrateful clerk neglects the sources of his credit."

The next chapter tells how the good clergy used, not only to commune with books, but to write them, and are, therefore, to be remembered with perpetual blessings. But now Thersites wields the armour of Achilles, the choice trappings of the coursers lie strewn under the asses' feet, the blinking night-birds rule the eagles' nests, the book of the bibbers is preferred to the book of the Fathers, there is more care to drain a cup than to emend a codex, and to their cups they are not ashamed to add music rivalling in lasciviousness that of Timotheus.* Our regular canons neglect the rule of Augustine, that books are to be asked for at certain hours every day: but the reverend Fathers carry bows and arrows, arms and bucklers; give alms to their dogs, not to the poor; use dice and draughts, and those things which we are used to forbid secular men; so that we need not wonder if books are not thought worthy to be looked upon. Turn therefore, reverend Fathers, to your books.

The mendicant friar as he used to be, is praised in the next chapter (the sixth), and contrasted with the mendicant friar as he is, concerned only for three things—his belly, clothes, and house—never considering the crow nor the lily which the Most High feeds and clothes. "The people," says Richard de Bury, "fable that you tempt boys with apples into your Orders, and that when they have professed, you do not instruct them; but when they should be learning, send them begging, to catch at the favour of their friends, to the offence of their parents, their own peril, and the hurt of the Order. No wonder that unwilling boys, who have not been compelled to learn, grow into ignorant teachers. Against the law you yoke the ox and the ass together to the plough, when you commit the culture of God's field to the learned and the unlearned. Paul ordered these three things to be brought him by Timothy, instead of all his household stuff—his cloak, his books, and parchments,—affording a pattern to evangelical men that they should wear the habit of their Order, have books for the sustainment of study,

* Timotheus (born B.C. 446) added more strings to the ancient lyre and complexity to the old simple songs. As he was also author of a poem, "Semele," considered to be indecent, his multiplication of strings caused controversy, and was argued to be an innovation sensual and hurtful to morals. He was publicly reprimanded, and all the strings of his lyre that exceeded the orthodox seven were ordered to be cut; but he is said to have saved them by pointing to a small statue of Apollo, in which the lyre had as many strings as his own.

and parchments for writing, which the Apostle lays most stress on, saying, 'but especially the parchments.' Truly the clerk who cannot write is basely mutilated. The man carried a writer's inkhorn by his side, who set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh (Ezekiel ix.), figuratively suggesting that a man who cannot write must not presume to preach repentance."

In the seventh chapter "Philobiblon" deplores the destruction of books by war and fire; weeps for the lost library of the Ptolemies, for all the store of knowledge that was dissipated in the smoke of its burning, for the books lost also in other ancient wars; and rejoices at the thought of the books that Seleucus brought back from the Persians into Athens, to be placed on cedar shelves, with labels of gold and ivory for each partition,—on which the volumes themselves, reverently brought, are sweetly arranged, so that none impedes the entrance of another, or hurts its brother by too close a pressure.

In the eighth chapter Richard de Bury writes of his own manifold opportunities of gathering books from all quarters. He tells of his delight from youth in intercourse with men of letters and lovers of books, his place in the household of King Edward III., that gave him larger liberty of visiting at will, and, as it were, beating the choicest covers of libraries, private or public, clerical or lay. As the King's Chancellor and Treasurer, next to the discharge of his duty to the court and kingdom was his care to search for the hiding-places of books. His desire for books, especially old books, was widely known; it was reported that his favour was more easily to be won by books than by money. Therefore when his place with the king gave him power strongly to advance desires of great and small, instead of other gifts there flowed in on him decrepit volumes, precious in his sight. The stores of the noblest monasteries were opened, chests were unlocked, and astonished books raised from their sepulchres. Books, once most delicate, lay lifeless, befouled by mice and gnawed by worms; and those once clothed in purple and fine linen, lying in dust and ashes, seemed to have become homes of the moths. To these he sat down with delight—some given to him, some sold to him, some lent to him for a time. Many, seeing them to be his chief pleasure, studied to give him all books they could spare; "and," he adds, "as I took care so to expedite their affairs that they were gainers, justice came to no hurt." When sent on embassies to the Roman Chair, and to the Court of France, and to other kingdoms, he took with him his love of books How his heart rejoiced when he visited Paris, the world's paradise; there were delightful libraries, there were academic meads! There, with loosened purse-strings, he scattered money with a glad heart, and

redeemed books beyond price with dirt and sand. From earliest youth, too, he had sought the conversation and companionship of the learned; such were the chosen comrades of his journeys, such sat with him at table, and were in almost constant fellowship with him. But Justice, looking down from heaven, sometimes gave them well-earned promotions and dignities, by which he lost the enjoyment of them. Again, never having disdained the poverty of religious mendicants, but having everywhere cherished them kindly for the love of God, they were peculiarly zealous to content his desires, and searched for him through many provinces, in certain hope of reward. If a devout sermon resounded from the Roman Court, or for new reasons some question were being ventilated; if Parisian solidity, now more studious of antiquity than of the subtle working out of truth; if English perspicacity, which, while ancient lights pour through it, emits always new rays of truth, added anything to the substance of knowledge or the setting forth of faith--this, while yet fresh, was poured immediately and unaltered into his ears. When he visited towns where these religious Orders had libraries, he was not slow to visit their chests and whatever repositories of books they might have; for there, amidst the utmost poverty, he found stores of the utmost wealth. Wealthiest in this way, and most liberal, were the Preaching Friars. There was money also to engage the services in France, Germany, and Italy of those who bought and sold books. Books were sought and well paid for, among masters of rural schools and teachers of country boys. Moreover, he had always at hand in his halls no small number of antiquaries, writers, binders, correctors, illuminators, and generally of all who could labour usefully in the service of books. Finally, persons of either sex and every degree could with a knock open the door of his heart. All were admitted who brought books; so that there was a constant flight to him of books of all sorts, as to a loadstone by which they were attracted.

In his ninth chapter Richard de Bury shows that the ancient students exceeded the modern in fervency of learning. Sophocles wrote of Œdipus at the age of a hundred. Archimedes was killed because he would not speak nor raise his head from his work on a figure of geometry. Minerva seems to have made the round of the nations; she has visited the Indians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Arabians, and Latins; she forsook Athens and next Rome, has passed out of Paris, and now happily reached Britain, the most notable of the islands. From which miracle many conjecture that as the wisdom of Gaul already grows lukewarm, so also her warfare languishes almost emasculate. [This was written not long after Edward III. had quartered the French lilies with the arms of England, and called

himself King of France. The battle of Crécy was fought in the year following that of Richard de Bury's death.]

The tenth chapter of "Philobiblon," with a glance at heresies, speaks of the gradual growth of knowledge, and of the author's provision for his scholars of a Greek and Hebrew Lexicon.

In the eleventh chapter Richard de Bury tells us that he never much cared to acquire volumes of civil law, but that they are useful things in their way, like the scorpion in treacle, as Aristotle said of logic. Sciences are delightful, but laws, the yokes of princes thrown over the horns of their subjects, have more in them of the empire of will than of the judgment of reason. Therefore, as laws are neither arts nor sciences, law-books are books of neither, and their faculty cannot be numbered among the sciences, though by an appropriate word it might be called geology. [A science that is of the earth, earthy; this joke being an accidental use, the first in our literature, of the name of a science that now lays open, in the great book of the earth itself, the divine thoughts of its Creator.]

Richard de Bury's twelfth chapter is a short one on the use and need of grammar, and it tells how he has ordered foreign words to be noted in vocabularies for the aid of readers who are impeded by them, and how he has laboured to renew the life of many old books of the grammarians in emended editions, that therewith he might pave the highway of knowledge, so that future scholars should walk forward without stumbling.

The thirteenth chapter is a vindication of the use of poetry, in which Richard Aungervyle quotes Bede, with the title of the Venerable, as an authority for spiritual use that may be made of reading fables of the heathen.

The fourteenth chapter treats of those who ought most to love books—princes and prelates, judges and teachers, and all who direct affairs; and here, besides quoting the ancients, Richard de Bury refers to the "Polycraticon" of John of Salisbury the reflection that God, who fashioned the hearts of men, has willed that a Book, of which He ordained the continual reading and use as the soul's healthiest daily food, should be, as it were, the antidote to all their ills.

The fifteenth chapter is on the manifold effect of the knowledge that is contained in books. A man cannot serve books and mammon. Books show us now the Creator, now the creature, bid us survey the Antarctic Pole, the galaxy of stars, and reach to the First Cause of All. Books also speak to princes boldly in the chamber from which man's voice is shut out.

The next chapter, upon the writing of new books and repair of old

ones, speaks of our Saviour's exercising the office of a writer when, stooping down, He wrote with His finger on the ground, and exclaims, "Oh, singular serenity of writing, at whose making the Artificer of the world, at whose tremendous name every knee bends, bowed down!"

The seventeenth chapter of "Philobiblon" is on the cleanly handling and orderly keeping of books. "Let not the clergy," it says, "touch them with unclean hands, unclasp them too hastily, or, after use, throw them aside not duly closed; for a book needs to be kept with very much more care than a shoe. Perhaps you will see a bull-necked youth sitting sluggishly at his study, and when the cold is sharp in winter-time, and his wet nose, at the pinch of frost, runs into drops, he does not condescend to use his handkerchief till he has wetted the book beneath with its vile dew. I would give such a one, instead of a book, a cobbler's apron. He has a nail like a giant's, full of stinking filth, wherewith he marks the place of anything that pleases him. He disperses innumerable short straws, which he sticks in different places with their ends in sight, that the straw may restore to him what he cannot keep in his memory. These straws, which disagree with the stomach of the book, and which nobody takes out, first stretch the binding, and then, negligently forgotten, rot. He is not afraid to eat fruit and cheese over an open volume, and carelessly to pass his cup hither and thither over it; and because his alms-bag is not handy, he will discharge his crumbs into the books. With continual garrulity he never ceases to bow-wow with his companions; and while he adduces a multitude of arguments devoid of sense, he moistens with sputterings of spittle the book spread out on his lap below. What more! he next rests on the book with folded arms, short study inviting long repose; and, to repair his crumpling, he bends back the margins of the leaves, to the no small hurt of the volume.

"The rains pass, and the flowers appear on the earth; then the scholar whom I describe, a neglecter rather than an examiner of books, will stuff his book with primrose and rose and quatrefoil. Then he will use for turning over the volumes hands wet and pouring with sweat. Then he will come upon the white parchment everywhere with dusty gloves, and with a forefinger clothed in old skin will hunt over the page, line by line. Then at the prick of a biting flea the sacred book is tossed away, which is yet scarcely shut for the next month, and so swells with the dirt collected in it that it will not close easily when one tries to shut it."

He objects to boys who, having good books to copy from, deface their margins with impudent scrawls; to the thieves who cut away

clean margins for use as letter-paper; to wet, crying children, who finger and daub books shown them for their admiration of an ornamented letter. Books should be read only with clean hands; damage should be repaired before it spreads. Moses (Deuteronomy xxxi.) taught how to take care of books. "Take the book," he said, "and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God." O fit place and convenient library, which was made of imperishable Shittim wood, and covered over with gold inside and out! But our Saviour, too, by His example excludes negligence in treatment of books, as is read in the fourth chapter of Luke; when He had finished reading He did not give the book again to the minister till He had first closed it with His most holy hands.

In the next, the eighteenth, chapter of his "Philobiblon," Richard de Bury justifies himself against his detractors, and says that he has long had a rooted purpose to found a Hall in the University of Oxford, and place his books in it for the use and benefit, not only of the scholars of that Hall, but of the whole University.

In the nineteenth chapter he proceeds to explain the plan of his Hall, given to a company of scholars as an almsdeed for his own soul and the souls of his parents, and for the souls of King Edward III. and Queen Philippa. A catalogue has been made of the books given, and they are to be lent out to scholars and masters on a certain plan. Five scholars deputed by the master of the Hall are to have custody of the books, of which five, three, and never fewer, shall be competent to lend any books, for inspection and use only; none may go beyond the walls of the house for copying and transcribing. A book shall not be lent to any person not of the company of scholars of the Hall, unless there be a duplicate of it, and then only when security is taken that exceeds the value of the book itself. But to scholars of the Hall there shall be free use of all the books, the scholar's name and the day on which a book is taken by him being noted down. He may not lend it to another without assent of three of the aforesaid keepers, when the name of the other borrower is to be substituted for his own. All must swear that they will use the books only for inspection or study, and never carry them beyond bounds of the city of Oxford and its suburbs. The keepers of the library must make an annual report to the master of the house; there must be also annual inspection of the catalogue and shelves; and every borrower must show a book he is using to the keeper once in a twelvemonth, and may ask to see his security for the return of it. Whoever loses a book must pay for it, and any profit falling to the keepers of the library must be spent only upon the repairing of the volumes.

In his twentieth and last chapter Richard de Bury desires to be prayed for, and exhorts students how they shall devoutly pray to the Redeemer and to the Father of Mercy, to the Blessed Virgin and Queen-Mother, and to St. Cuthbert the Confessor, whose flock he had, though unworthy, taken upon himself to feed.*

These were the thoughts of the powerful bishop who chose for his friends Holcot and Bradwardine; Manduit, skilled in astronomy and medicine, whose mathematical tables remained long in use; Walter Burley, the acute Scotist philosopher and expert scholar in Aristotle, whose

* There are MSS. of "Philobiblon" in the British Museum (Harl. No. 3,224; Cotton. Faustina, p. 158); in the Bodleian (Digby Collection, No. 147) at Trinity College, Oxford; in Bishop Cosin's library at Durham; and a few churches in England, besides those upon the Continent. "Philobiblon" was first printed at Cologne in 1473, in a book of forty-eight leaves, without paging or headline. It has red initial letters to the chapters, and is printed in Gothic characters that exactly resemble those of a clear MS. Ten years later it was reprinted at Spires. It was twice reprinted at Paris in 1500, and its fifth edition —its first English edition—was that published at Oxford, in 1599, by Thomas James, in sixty-two pages, with four pages of prefatory dedication to Thomas Bodley, a page prefixing Richard of Bury's life, from Bale, and eight appended pages containing a list of authors whose names would appear in a catalogue of Oxford MSS. An English translation of the "Philobiblon," made by John B. Inglis, was published by Rodd the bookseller in 1832. This is reprinted with other pieces in vol. lxiii. ("A Miscellany") of my "Universal Library" (1888). From three MSS. in the Imperial Library, Paris, M. Hippolyte Cocheris collated the best modern library edition of the "Philobiblon" (Paris, 1856), in two vols. fcap. 8vo., of which one gives the Latin text, the other its first translation into French, prefaced with biographical, bibliographical, and literary notices, and followed by eighteen *pièces justificatives*. All this illustrative matter has been translated into English for an American reprint of the same Latin text, face to face with Inglis's English translation. That "First American edition . . . . collated and corrected, with notes by Samuel Hand," was published at Albany in 1861. This volume, or the original edition by M. Cocheris, is best adapted to the uses of the student.

active intellect produced a library of treatises; and Fitzraufe, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh, strong enemy to the abuse of their privileges by the mendicant friars, against whom he wrote a book, and who accused him to the Pope of heresy. Fitzraufe died at Avignon in 1359.

Much as he loved the backs and bellies of his volumes, Richard de Bury knew how to love them yet more for the souls within their bodies, and for the good uses to which they could be put. It was, as we have seen, a living delight to him to place his library at the poor scholar's service, and attend also to the poor scholar's back and belly, while he stocked his head as a not slighted guest at Bishop Auckland. He desired that his books after his death should still live and give life.

Aungervyle's library.

As early as the year 1290 the monks of Durham had begun to build on a piece of land which they had bought as a place of study for their novices in the north suburbs of Oxford. Richard de Bury partly endowed this Hall, and left to it, as we have seen, his library, containing more volumes than all the other bishops in England had then in their custody. The books bequeathed by him were kept in chests, for use as he directed, until a library was built for them in the time of Henry IV., when they were put into pews or studies, and chained to them. In this manner Richard de Bury's books were kept for use of the scholars of Durham College and of the University until the college was dissolved by Henry VIII., and the books were conveyed, some to Duke Humphrey's library, remaining there until the time of Edward VI., and others to the library of Balliol College. Those that remained behind came into the possession of the king's physician, Dr. George Owen, of Godstow, when he and William Martyn obtained of King Edward VI. the site of Durham College. The ruined buildings were transferred by Owen and Martyn in the year 1544 to Sir Thomas Pope,

who repaired them and re-established them as a place of study, thenceforth to be called Trinity College.

To tell of his endeavour to make books serviceable to the restoration of learning is the main purpose of Richard de Bury's "Philobiblon," which is not so much the essay of a bibliomaniac as of a rich and learned man of the world who justifies his extreme zeal in book-collecting on the only high and valid grounds. Though he carries with him as a writer no small handful of the over-blown flowers of mediæval rhetoric, it is the man whom we see, with a frank face and a firm tread, not hidden behind the flowers that he carries. That "lightest manner of the moderns," in which Richard Aungervyle professed to write, he did so far attain as to make his book a brief one, pleasant and ingenious even where it is most rhetorical, but thoroughly individual and hearty wherever it had something of home truth to say, and meant to speak it home. His account of his reason for book-collecting and directions for the future keeping of his library are quite simple and clear. His representation of the comfort that there is in books as silent counsellors is terse as it is true. There is no mincing of words in his winter and summer sketches of the sort of mediæval scholar with whom books suffered much by contact, while the handler of them gained as little as might be. Undoubtedly, Richard de Bury was more man of the world than scholarly recluse, much as his liberal mind relished intellectual enjoyments and the friendliest domestic intercourse with learned men. He had held his own at court with clever suppleness before he staked his future fortunes, honestly we may well believe, upon advocacy of the prince's cause against the king's. He allowed himself to be forced as the Pope's nominee, against the will of the Chapter, into

Spirit of the "Philobiblon."

* Antony à Wood's "History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford," ed. J. Gutch, vol. ii., pp. 910–11; and of the "Colleges and Halls," pp. 517, 527.

the bishopric of Durham; but he made liberal use as bishop of his wealth arising from court favour. For a Lord Chancellor he was, at least, candid in declaring law to be no art or science, and in regarding law-books as too simply an exposition of that which has been ordained by the arbitrary will of men in power. "Philobiblon" shows an equal candour in the way of telling that when Richard de Bury received, as Lord Chancellor, gifts of the books that were his chief delight, since he took care to expedite the causes of the givers, "justice did not suffer." Value was given for the books; the suitor had his payment in kind from the judge; and so the books thus given to him he might fairly consider himself to have bought. But he does not tell us, and we do not think, that for a bribe of books the causes he decided went against his own judgment of right, or of the bad law superseding right. He says only that they were expedited. That, too, is bribery, but not of the basest sort. And as to that he has only himself for an accuser.

Among the learned Englishmen who lived for a time at Auckland as the bishop's chaplains and familiar friends, and who drew some part of their knowledge from his library, two were in and after their own time especially famous among our writers, Robert Holcot and Thomas Bradwardine. They survived their friend and patron for four years, when they both died of the Great Mortality—the spread into England of the Plague of Florence—in the same year, 1349.

Robert Holcot.

Robert Holcot, the Dominican, who was born and educated at Northampton, was at the time of his death in that plague-year 1349 General of the order of the Austin Friars. As teacher of theology at Oxford, he was then delivering a course of lectures on Ecclesiastes,* of which there remain his comments on the first seven chapters. He was, in philosophy, a defender

* "Trithemius de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis," ed. 1494, fol. 90.

of Nominalism. As a student he is said never, by his own act, to have lost an hour. He was distinguished also among Preaching Friars for his eloquence. He wrote many works,* of which the chief are four books on Opinions, "Super Sententias." There are six main questions in the first of these books, and four in the second; there is only one in the third, and in the fourth book there are eight. Each main question heads a collection of subordinate questions, and the character of all is, that they seek not an explanation, but a settlement, of faith. They are questions beginning not with a Why, but with a Whether, upon such matters theological as, "Whether a man, being under grace, by assent to the articles of faith deserves eternal life?" with knotty arguments upon Freewill, upon the three Persons of the Deity, upon the Justice of Divine Rule. It is asked, Whether God foreknew that He should produce the world? Whether the devils fell by their own will? Whether the Son of God could become incarnate? (that is the single question of the third book). Whether the Body of Christ really and truly exists in the Bread of the Sacrament? Whether Confession to the priest is necessary and salutary? And so on to the last question, Whether eternal happiness is the reward of the good wayfarer through life? —man being throughout the argument logically represented as any wayfarer, "quilibet Viator." Then follow upon the consideration of these questions conferences and discussions on the Imputability of Sin, and other subjects calling forth all the acuteness of the mediæval theologian.

Holcot, "Super Sententias."

Holcot wrote also single books on the Seven Mortal Sins, on the Origin, End, and Remedy of Sin, on the

* A complete edition of Holcot's works was published at Strasburg in three volumes, and single works have been frequently reprinted on the Continent, at Paris, Venice, Basle, Spires, Bruges, Hagenau, and Reutlingen.

Immortality of the Soul, on the Book of Wisdom, on the Song of Songs, Moralisations of Histories. He wrote also, among other unpublished works, Sermons and Scholastic Lectures, Commentaries on the twelve Lesser Prophets and the four Evangelists, and books on the Allegories of the Old Testament, on the Allegories of Ovid, on the Stars and on the Serpent, on the Favourers of Heretics, and on the Liberty of Faith. There have been falsely ascribed to him a Dietary and a book on the Game of Chess.*

His other writings.

Upon the authority of a MS. of the "Philobiblon" at Corpus Christi College, Oxford,† and another at Venice,‡ the authorship even of Richard de Bury's work has been given to Robert Holcot in Echard's literary history of the Dominicans; but we have seen that internal evidence places the true authorship beyond question. Holcot, no doubt, copied his patron's treatise, and may have set his name to a copy which, being re-copied from his MS., would be wholly attributed to him by an ignorant transcriber.

More than half a century after his death we have evidence of the popularity of Holcot's writings in the familiar quotation of him by Thomas Hoccleve, when, repentant of the misrule of his life, that disciple of Chaucer tells of the flatteries he had been too weak to resist, and quotes an example of the wise Ulysses with which Holcot had backed Solomon's wisdom :—

* Zedler's "Universal Lexicon," Leipz. und Halle, 1735, contains a list of Continental editions of Holcot's writings, and one or two details probably derived from them, of which, with a single fact from Tanner's "Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica," I have added the substance to the brief record of Trithemius.

† No. 1,634, inscribed "Philobiblon R. de Bury, quem librum compilavit Rob. Holcot ordinis Prædicatorum, sub nomine dicti episcopi."

‡ Inscribed "Philobiblon magistri Roberti Holkoth, Angli, ordinis Prædicatorum."

"Holcoté seith upon the book also
Of Sapience, as it can testifie,
Whan that Ulixes saillid to and fro
By meermaidés, this was his policie:
All erés of men of his compaignie
With wex he stoppé leet, for that they noght
His song sholde heeré, lest the armonie
Hem might unto swich deedly sleep han broght,
And bond himself unto the shippés mast,
So thus hem all savéd his providence."

Thomas Bradwardine, the Profound Doctor, of an old family named after a village on the Wye still called Bredwardine, was born at Chichester,* or, Bale says, at Hartfield, in the diocese of Chichester, at some time in the middle of the reign of Edward I.† He graduated at Merton College, and was Proctor in the University of Oxford in the year 1325. He proceeded to the degree of D.D., and became also Divinity Professor and Chancellor of the University. Some of his divinity lectures survive in his chief work, "On the Cause of God (De Causâ Dei) against the Pelagians," for which the Pope honoured him with the title of the Profound Doctor; and Chaucer,‡ when he pictures a tough disputation, takes Bradwardine as one type of the man able to sift it:—

Thomas Bradwardine.

"But I ne can not boult it to the bren
As can the holy doctour Augustin,
Or Boëce, or the Bishop Bradwardin."

Thomas Bradwardine was already Chancellor of his University when he lived as chaplain and friend to Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, whose library satisfied the

* "Quicquid nunc scribo Oxoniæ, scriberet pater meus Cicestriæ, quia genuit me scribentem, imo avus et proavus."—"De Causâ Dei," lib. iii., cap. 22.

† Sir Henry Savile suggests about 1290.

‡ Nonnes Preestes Tale.

intellectual, and whose influence at court satisfied the material, desires of those who associated with him and were found worthy to be his friends. Bradwardine now became Chancellor of the diocese of London, Prebendary of Lincoln—an office that his tender conscience caused him to accept with hesitation—and chaplain and confessor to King Edward III., whom he attended during his wars in France. There the uncouth scholar, whose clumsiness of manner was a jest to the Pope's nephew at Avignon, would address as priest and patriot the English army on the eve of battle. The king annulled the election when Bradwardine was first chosen Archbishop by the monks of Canterbury, saying that he "could ill spare so worthy a man, and never could see that he wished himself to be spared." But within the year the see fell vacant a second time, and then, in the year 1349, Bradwardine was again elected, this time to be consecrated by the Pope at Avignon. He then came to England, where he died of the prevailing plague, or Great Mortality, forty days after his consecration, and before he was enthroned.

His mathematical works.

Besides his maturer work, maintaining professedly the Cause of God against the Pelagians, Bradwardine wrote while at the University on Speculative Geometry and Arithmetic, on Proportions of Velocities, and formed a rather thick volume of astronomical tables, showing the equations of the planets and conjunctions and oppositions of luminaries. These arithmetical and mathematical works, except the astronomical tables, have been all printed at Paris.

His "De Causâ Dei."

Thomas Bradwardine's three books "Upon the Cause of God against Pelagius and upon the Virtue of Causes," addressed to his fellow-collegians at Merton,* were received with immediate applause, and

* The work was first printed from collation of six MSS. in 1618, in a handsome folio, by Sir Henry Savile, also of Merton College, at

copies were obtained for almost all the libraries in Europe. His previous works had represented exclusively his eminence as a mathematician. He was now the first to treat theological questions mathematically by setting out with two hypotheses as principles:—(1) That God is supremely perfect and supremely good; (2) that no process is infinite *in entibus*, but in every genus there is one that is first. From these points he deduces corollaries, by demonstration, as nearly as may be, after the manner of Euclid, against all kinds of heresies, with a devout faith not only in the authority of sacred writers, but also of the "Secreta Secretorum," the "Vacca," and "De Vetulâ," ascribed to Aristotle, Plato, and Ovid, and Hermes' "Pomander." This monument of mediæval mathematical theology, based upon University lectures against the Pelagian heresy, occupies 876 closely-filled pages of a massive folio. The numerous and active favourers of the opinions of Pelagius in Bradwardine's time had said that those opinions could not be confuted by natural and philosophical reasoning. Therefore, says Bradwardine, full of zeal for the cause of God, he thrust his hand knowingly into a terrible flame, content that the Pelagians should bark and bite at him. But in his controversy he desired "to persecute not the person, but the vice; not a man, but an error." So the work treats in its first forty corollaries of forty errors concerning the nature of God. Starting from that error which denies His existence, it shows the immutable God to be the necessary maintainer and mover of all things, whose Will is their great First Cause; that He is ubiquitous, omniscient, and loves His creatures; that His Will is all-powerful. His world is

the instance of George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury. Bradwardine's name was variously spelt by foreign writers—Bredewardine, Brauardine, Bragwardine, Branduardine, and Brandinkardin. His name is spelt Bradwardine in the Oxford list of Chancellors and Proctors. I follow in the text Sir H. Savile's account of his author.

complex. God Himself is simple; the "I am." God is, God knows all, God wills all. If God ceased to be, there would be no more past or future, possible or impossible, true or false. The things known are not the cause of Divine Knowledge; but Divine Knowledge is the cause of the things known. So of Divine Will; the Knowledge and Will of God being both immutable. Hence follow arguments of fate and fortune and relation of God's Will to sin, and arguments against the doctrine of the Pelagians that man's merits, although not the principal cause of the grace of God, are yet a cause *sine quâ non*. The prepared train of demonstration is also concentrated in support of the then orthodox doctrines concerning repentance and predestination. There ends the first book, and the second and third books deal at length with all known forms of the great question of Free Will and Divine Foreknowledge. It should be added that Bradwardine's mighty treatise includes among its pages that story—of the holy man and the good angel who seemed to be of hell—which is also in the "Gesta Romanorum," and was told again, long afterwards, by Thomas Parnell in his "Hermit."

Among arguments in demonstration of the truth of Christian miracles, Bradwardine* points to the evidence of his own time in the cure of the King's Evil by royal touch, after speaking, imposition of hands, benediction, and the sign of the cross made in the name of Jesus. "This," he says, "is done daily, and certified most surely by the people of England, France, and Germany, and common fame, according to the testimony both of those who have been cured and of those who have been present and have seen. And that it is usual for all Christian kings of England and France to have this divine gift, ancient books and the common report of their kingdoms agree in testifying, whence also the disease has taken the name of Royal"—Morbus Regius, King's Evil.

* "De Causâ Dei," lib. i., cap. i., corol. pars 32.

The great representative of physic in this country, who took as much care of the body as Richard de Bury took of the mind of the young prince who became Edward III., sent all his scrofulous patients who were not to be cured with weasel's blood or pigeon's dung to ask the king for the royal touch.

This foremost representative of the medical literature and learning of his time was John of Gaddesden, who studied at Merton College, Oxford, and was a Doctor of Physic in the year 1320. Under the name of "Rosa Anglica" he wrote a famous compilation of the whole practice of physic, chiefly as derived from the Arabians by himself and by Gilbert Anglicus and other of his predecessors, with additions from his own experience. His "Rose of England" may have been so named with reference to the Lily of France—"Medicinæ Lilium"—by Bernard Gordon, who died in 1305, after having been for twenty years Professor of Medicine in Montpellier. John of Gaddesden's book was considered by Leland to entitle him to be called "the light of his age;" and it was indeed shrewd, as well as learned, according to the light of his age, which prescribed for epilepsy such medicaments as a boar's bladder boiled, mistletoe, and a cuckoo. As to the origin of diseases, John of Gaddesden had nothing of his own to tell; but his "Rosa Anglica" contains an unequalled collection of all the prescriptions and nostrums used by the physicians of his time. He knew how to make money, by satisfying the desires of patients with great show of action and by pleasing them with his professional talk, if we may infer so much from his book, which is sprinkled with scraps of verse, some of them of his own invention, and which often mixes English with its Latin. He, as the old physicians always did, treated of diet and the art of cookery. He taught the ladies how to make perfumes and washes. He contrived

John of Gaddesden.

His "Rosa Anglica."

select and costly medicines for the rich, and, when he tells of a medicine that is costly, directs that the rich patient have a double dose of it. He teaches how, in case of palsy, to dress fox-skins against wintry weather. He is etymological, and the name of the enveloping membrane of the bowels (peritoneum) he derives from its relation to the seat of flatulence, as "juxta tonantem." When the prince under his care had smallpox, he says that he prevented pockmarks by causing the patient to be wrapped in scarlet, and everything about the bed to be red. This thereafter became one of his rules in treatment of the disease. John of Gaddesden was also bone-setter and oculist. He could draw a rotten tooth; kill lice when his clerical patients (whom he especially names in relation to this part of his practice) were much troubled with them; and he would cut corns. He had secret remedies, not to be divulged to the laity, especially some that were associated with strong waters and brandy; and says that he cannot tell us how much in money and gifts he got for them. He had good money for a recipe of tree-frogs which he sold to the barber-surgeons.*

This busy and prosperous medical writer and practitioner was made prebendary of St. Paul's in the (income-bearing) stall of Ealdland, and it is recorded of him, to his honour, that he ousted the foreigners who had enjoyed monopoly of royal favours, and was the first Englishman employed at court as a physician.†

Among the authorities well known to his Doctor of

* "Pro quo habui bonam pecuniam a barbitonsoribus."

† "Freind's History of Physick, from the Time of Galen to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century" (ed. 1727), vol. ii., pp. 277—293. "Rosa Anglica, Practica Medicine a capite ad pedes," Joannis Anglici, was first printed in folio at Pavia in 1492, reprinted at Venice in 1506 and 1516, and at Naples in 1503. A later edition, in two volumes folio, was published at Augsburg in 1595.

Physic, Chaucer cites with John of Gaddesden Bernard Gordon, author of the "Medicinæ Lilium," and Gaddesden's obscurer predecessor Gilbert, called Anglicus, who lived probably in the beginning of the reign of Edward I., and compiled his book of medicine from treatises of the Arabians, including entire chapters taken word for word from Rhases. That Doctor of Chaucer's—

> "Wel he knew the old Esculapius
> * * * *
> Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin,
> Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin."

CHAPTER IV.

MIRACLE PLAYS.

THE plays of Hilarius* were written to be acted within the church—if at Matins, before the "Te Deum;" and if at Vespers, before the "Magnificat." The next step towards the extension of this manner of teaching we find taken by one of the most ancient of all mystery plays which, with other pieces, comes down to our time in a twelfth-century manuscript, erroneously labelled "Prières en Vers." It was found by M. Victor Luzarche while making a catalogue of the town library of Tours,† and is a sequence of three Anglo-Norman plays, with Latin stage directions, followed by an Anglo-Norman poem which leads up to the sounding of the last trumpet, and is probably an introduction to a play of the Last Judgment.

Early Plays in a MS. at Tours.

The first of the three plays set forth the fall of Adam and Eve; after which "devils shall take them and put them into hell, and they shall make great smoke to rise in it, and cry aloud." The second showed the consequence of the Fall, in Cain's murder of Abel; the end being that "devils coming, Cain is led to hell, being often struck, but they shall take Abel more mildly. Then the Prophets shall be ready, each in a convenient place of concealment," and

* "E. W.," III. 104—113.

† "Adam, Drame Anglo-Normand du XII^e^ Siècle, publié pour la première fois d'après un manuscrit de la Bibliothèque de Tours, par Victor Luzarche," Tours (1854).

as they come out and prophesy in turn of Christ, the devils take them also into hell. Evidently this was part or the whole of an Old Testament sequence, of which the purpose was to introduce the Church's showing of the mystery of salvation through Christ. This play, as old as the plays of Hilarius, and of a date two hundred years before Chaucer, belongs to a time when the clergy were the actors, and is the first recorded instance of their having made use of a scaffold outside the church door. God was represented, as the stage directions show, to come out of the church. The representation also, retaining its connection with church service, is blended with the hymns of choristers. There was some natural character in the dialogue of these pieces; dramatic life, for example, in the conversation by which the devil tempted Adam.* The dialogue, in fact, in these earliest plays might have belonged to the plays still acted at Chester as late as 1577, or at Coventry as late as 1580.

Management of the Stage.

The arrangement of the stage was simple. Out of the heaven of the church, Figura (God) passed to Adam in Paradise, upon a stage level with the highest steps of the church door. From that Paradise Adam and Eve were driven down a few steps to the lower stage that represented earth. Below this, nearest to the spectators, was hell—an enclosed place in which cries were heard, chains were rattled, and out of which smoke came; out of which also devils came by a door opening into a free space between the scaffolding and the semicircle of the front row of spectators. The devils were also directed now and then to go among the people, and passed round by them sometimes to one of the upper platforms.

In a Latin story of the thirteenth or fourteenth century

* See an interesting criticism on this play by Adolf Ebert in the *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* for Feb. 14, 1856.

we read of persons coming to "a long meadow, in which was collected a very great multitude of men, now silent, now to be heard laughing. Wondering, therefore, why there was so great a congregation of people in such a place, they supposed that the spectacles we called Mysteries were there being celebrated."* When the plays were spoken in Latin it was necessary that they should tell their story clearly to the eye, and the animation of a dumb show remained by them after they were acted in the language of the people. If it be true, not only that the "Chester Plays" were written by Ralph Higden about the year 1328, but that he went, as a note on one of the MSS. says that he did, three times to Rome to get leave to write them in the language of the people, then we may assume that these holy-day entertainments were comparatively new in English during Chaucer's childhood. But there was no reason why the Pope's leave should be asked upon the matter; and no doubt in England, as in France, the people had their Miracle Plays represented to them in their own language for at least three generations before Chaucer.

The Plays in English.

In Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" we read of jolly Absalon the parish clerk that—

> "Sometime to show his lightness and maistrie†
> He plaieth Herode on a skaffold hie,"

that being the character adorned in finest clothes; and in the same tale Nicholas, when he is persuading the carpenter of the coming of another flood, refers not to Genesis, but to the miracle play of the Flood, which he recalls by reference to its popular comic scene.

* Quoted by Mr. Thomas Wright in preface to the "Chester Plays," edited for the Shakespeare Society in 1843.

† Art or skill. Corrupted to another use of the word mystery, in guilds, for the art exercised in a trade.

"Hastow not herd (quod Nicholas)'also
The sorwe of Noe with his felawship,
Or that he mighté get his wif to schip."

When these plays came to be used, as they were in England, for the purpose of giving, after a fashion, the whole Bible story to the apprehension of a rude people, so that during a long summer's day play followed play from the Creation downward, it was necessary to sustain attention by some blending of homely jest with all the seriousness. Certain points in the story, which were not parts taken from the Bible, seem to have been used conventionally for this purpose, and one jesting-place was made by giving a temper of her own to Noah's wife. Thus in the Chester play of *Noah's Flood*, God having declared His intention, and commanded Noah to build the ark, he and his family bring hatchets, nails, timber, and hammer,* Japheth's wife gathering chips to make a fire and cook their dinners while they are at work. Then Noah builds the ark; but while he is at work his wife declares that she will not go in until she sees more need. The ark has been hammered at, and is supposed to be made. Then God orders the taking in of the beasts, clean and unclean. They are shown in a painting spread over the boards of the ark, as Noah and his family, except his wife, go in, reciting in turn a rhyming list of animals that are come in with them. Then cries Noah—

The Comic Passages.

"Wife, come in! Why standés thou there?
Thou art ever froward, I dare well swear;
Come in, on Godés name! half time it were,
For fear lest that we drown." †

* *Slyche.* Mr. Wright, in his edition of the "Chester Plays," interprets this word conjecturally "plaster." It means a hammer; in First-English, *slicce*, from *slēan*, to strike.

† "Chester Plays," ed. Shakespeare Society (1843), pp. 52, 53. As the date of the MS. is 1592, to avoid useless confusion I quote without retaining an old spelling which is not coeval with the text.

But the wife will not go in unless she may take all her gossips with her.

"Yea, sir, set up your sail
And row forth with evil hail,
For withouten fail
I will not out of this town:
But I have my gossips everechone
One foot farther I will not gone;
They shall not drown, by Saint John,
An I may save their life!
They loven me full well, by Christ!
But thou let them into thy chest,
Else row now where thee leiste
And get thee a new wife.

Noah. Shem, son, lo! Thy mother is wrawe;
By God, such another I do not knawe!

Shem. Father, I shall fetch her in, I trow,
Withouten any fail—
Mother, my father after thee send
And bids thee unto yeinder ship wend.
Look up and see the wind,
For we ben ready to sail.

Noah's Wife. Shem, go again to him, I say;
I will not come therein to-day.

Ham. Shall we all fetch her in?

Noah. Yea, sons, in Christés blessing and mine!
I would you hiéd you betime,
For of this Flood I am in doubt."

But Noah's wife all this while sits obstinate among her gossips, and as her sons advance to her the other women join with her in the

Good Gossips' Song.

"The Flood comes flitting in full fast
On every side that spreads full far;
For fear of drowning I am aghast.
Good Gossips, let us draw near
And let us drink or we depart,
For ofttimes we have done so;
For at a draught thou drinks a quart,

And so will I do or I go.
Here is a pottle full of Malmsey good and strong,
It will rejoice both heart and tongue;
Though Noah thinks us never so long,
Here we will drink alike."

Now the three sons have come to their mother, and says Japheth—

"Mother, we pray you all together,
For we are here, your owné children,
Come with the ship for fear of the weather
For his love that you bought!
Noah's Wife. That will I not, for all your call,
But I have my gossips all."

Now her three sons lay hands on her and haul her in, Shem saying—

"In faith, mother, yet you shall,
Whether thou wilt or not."

As she is pulled in at the door, Noah says to her, "Welcome, wife, into this boat;" upon which she gives him a box on the ears, answering, "Have then that for thy note" (noddle), and Noah cries—

"Ha! . . . ha! . . . Marry, this is hot!
It is good for to be still."

This, then, is what Chaucer meant by the

"Sorwe of Noe with his felawship
Or that he mighté get his wif to schip."

And of such sort was the broad practical jest with which the clergy interspersed the sacred story to maintain lively and pleased attention to it among their unlettered audiences.

The passing of these Miracle Plays from the church nave into the churchyard is connected with the rise of the first fairs. Indeed, the players' booths

The First Fairs.

at the fair, on which the favourite droll of "Jephthah's Rash Vow" was acted in Bartholomew Fair at least as late as 1733, are descended in a much more direct line than the greater theatres from the Scripture lessons, or Acts of the Apostles or Saints, that were really acted on high days and holidays, instead of being simply read at their appointed place in the Liturgy, before the "Te Deum" or the "Magnificat."

A great church or abbey made much of the festival day of its own patron saint. On that day especially its miracles were worked; on that day above others it was possible to attract worshippers from all parts, to bring offerings and honour to its shrine. If the saint was in high repute, the crowd of worshippers gathered about the shrine was often more than could be lodged in the small adjacent town or village, and the tents of those encamped at first in, afterwards (when that had again and again been forbidden) about, the churchyard, were the first booths of the fair. The whole saint's day was holy, and to be spent about the shrine. The day before was for coming, and the day after for going; hence the customary three days of a fair. In days of insecure travel, and little help to traffic by exchange of commodity between persons living far apart from one another, the concourse of men from many parts suggested use of these religious meetings as occasions also for exchange of produce and extension of trade; hence the trade of the fair. To add to the attraction of their saint's day, and to satisfy the eyes of all who came, the clergy acted their saint's Miracle Play, or other plays, not only inside the church, but also on a platform outside, and so it was that the Miracle Plays or Mysteries passed out through the church porch and came to be a common entertainment of the people.*

* This subject I have dwelt upon with full detail in chaps. i.—vi. of "Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair," which show also the long-continuance of entertainments that retained much of the form of the old

Then also the guilds, that were formed in England as early as the eleventh century, had each its saint; and laymen, who had occasionally been called to help the clergy, were tempted on the saints' days of their guilds, and other great religious holidays, to turn their organisation to account in the production of a sacred pageant of their own. The plays were written in the monasteries for edification of the many; and the Church could have no reason for discouraging an emulation that caused laymen to spend money, time, and skill upon the fit and frequent presentation of them to the people. Every corporation had once a year its own particular saint's day, on which its members worshipped and dined together; while there was afterwards also one religious festival—the Corpus Christi—kept as a common holiday by all guilds of a town. At the guild dinners, probably, in the first instance, the men of a trade played the story of their saint by way of interlude or mask. Such

Lay Actors in the Guilds.

Miracle Play. In some parts of Europe these plays are still to be seen, as of old. The most famous is the "Mystery of the Passion," played every ten years at Ober Ammergau, in Upper Bavaria, on twelve Sundays between April and October; but it began at a time when Miracle Plays had long ceased to be acted in England. A writer, describing it in an October number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* for 1866, says that a performance in presence of about six thousand spectators seated in the open air lasted "from eight in the morning till six in the evening, with one interval of an hour for dinner, and another of a second hour caused by a sudden storm." He reports also that at the death of Christ on the Cross, with the words "It is finished," "the sternest Protestants are said to be carried away, and to join their tears to the sobbing and weeping that breaks out through the entire assemblage." A friend who witnessed a French Miracle Play in Switzerland some years ago found in it passages of a rudeness that resembled gross irreverence. Thus, after the "Passion," came a scene in heaven, where two angels awaken God with the words—

"Père éternel, lève toi! n'as tu vergogne!
Ton fils est mort, et tu dors comme un ivrogne!"

entertainments of theirs might then have passed out of the dining-hall into the street, where they brought honour to the corporation, and perhaps paid part of their expense in money collected from among the lookers-on.

The earliest references to our out-of-door plays of this kind are to stories from the Lives of Saints, and not to Bible Mysteries. The oldest reference is that of Matthew Paris to the play of St. Katherine, acted, before A.D. 1119, by the pupils of Geoffrey, afterwards Abbot of St. Albans, at Dunstable.* Fitzstephen also, referring between 1170 and 1182 to the open representation of these plays among the Londoners, says that, instead of ancient shows of the theatre, London had "entertainments of a more devout kind, either representations of those miracles which were wrought by holy confessors, or those passions and sufferings in which the martyrs so rigidly displayed their fortitude." Two groups of topics are here specified in a formal description, and they exclude the subjects drawn from Scripture history. Moreover, the fact that, in opposition to the rule in France, Miracle Play remained in England the popular name for these entertainments, even when they had come to be almost exclusively Mysteries, corroborates the evidence that the plays so acted among the people were, for a time, only the legendary lives and deaths of saints and martyrs.†

In the middle of the thirteenth century, in the "Manuel des Pechiéz," translated by Robert of Brunne as "The Handlyng Sinne," it was accounted sin in the clergy to assist at any other plays than those which belonged to the Liturgy, and were acted in the church at Easter and Christmas.

* "E.W." III. 116.

† These two observations, and some that follow, were made by Professor Adolf Ebert, whose papers in the *Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur* on the "English Mysteries," vol. i., pp. 44—82, 131—170, and on the oldest "Italian Mysteries," vol. v., pp. 51—79, are the best that have been written on this form of literature.

Especially it was forbidden to assist anywhere in plays acted in churchyards, streets, or green places. Here, then, is indication of a separation of the offshoot from the parent stem. But the separation was imperfect. In 1378 the scholars or choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral petitioned Richard II. to prohibit the acting of the History of the Old Testament, to the great prejudice of the clergy of the Church, who had spent considerable sums for a public representation of Old Testament plays at the ensuing Christmas.* It was the Church also that, soon after the "Manuel des Pechiéz" was written, gave the most vigorous impulse to the bringing of the Mysteries themselves into the street.

The Festival of Corpus Christi.

In 1264 Pope Urban IV. founded the feast of Corpus Christi, in honour of the consecrated Host—an institution firmly established by Pope Clement V. in the year 1311. Thenceforth it became for the clergy a high festival day, still notable in Rome for its pomps, and distinguished from other Church feasts by a procession in which the people took part with the clergy. Thus the participating guilds came to regard Corpus Christi as their common festival. Rivalling each other in display of wealth for the adornment of the great procession, they carried pictures and images of saints and persons of Scripture; and they also attired living representatives of the Virgin in her silver crown, the angel Gabriel carrying a lily-stalk, the twelve Apostles, each labelled with his name upon his cap, or Saint Katherine with an attendance of eight maidens. It was an easy step from the parade of these persons, already dressed in character, to their employment in dramatic presentation of a sacred story. Thus it was that, not only in England, but in Spain also, with which England then had little communication of ideas, the feast of Corpus Christi became the great festival of sacred drama.

* Malone's "Shakespeare," quoted in Collier's "Annals of the Stage."

In Spain the *autos* (*actus*) *sacramentales* of the Corpus Christi days were religious street-plays that remained a popular form of the Spanish drama even in its best days. When Shakespeare was writing for England, Lope de Vega raised these Corpus Christi street-plays to their highest note in Spain, and they were suppressed with difficulty in the middle of the eighteenth century. To the last the Spaniards took them seriously, knelt, smote their breasts, and cried "Meâ Culpâ!" when St. Anthony on the stage repeated his *Confiteor*.*

But if sacred plays were to be acted, the right theme for a festival of Corpus Christi, the feast of the Christian Church, would be the story of the Church, the mystery of its relation to humanity, from the Creation to the life and death of Christ, the Resurrection, and the Day of Judgment. This festival, so closely associated with the Mysteries of Faith, was always held on the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Trinity Sunday being eight weeks after Easter, Corpus Christi was a holiday of brightest summer-time, when plays were welcome in the streets and meadows. Such use of the more sacred Mysteries being once freely admitted, they would be as welcome and as fit means of out-of-door edification in the fine weather of Whitsuntide. Clerical poets, who had no scruple about making Noah swear by St. John, produced sequences of plays showing what seemed to them to be the chief features in the scheme of Christianity from the beginning to the end of this world.

Such sequences, of which four are still preserved, were in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries acted at Chester, Coventry, Wakefield, York, Newcastle, Lancaster, Preston, Kendal, Wymondham, Dublin, and other places. The sequence of Mys-

The English Sequences of Plays.

* Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature," ed. 1863, vol. ii., p. 249.

teries written for one town would be used at others. Each neighbourhood which had produced no dramatist of its own, and wished to mount a series of Mysteries, might choose its set from among those which it knew to be in use. When the trade-guilds of any place undertook to celebrate a yearly festival with a complete series of Scripture Mysteries, each guild had its allotted play or pageant, and, barring a few transfers and readjustments, spent its energies year after year exclusively upon the attractive presentation of that one pageant alone.

The parish clerks of London formed themselves into an harmonic guild (chartered in 1233), and their music was sought at the funerals and entertainments of the great. In the year 1390, when Chaucer was at work, or soon about to be at work, upon the "Canterbury Tales," they played interludes in the fields at Skinner's Well for three days; Richard II., with his queen and court, being among the spectators. Again, in 1409, in the reign of Henry IV., the clerks played at Skinner's Well for eight days "matter from the Creation of the World," a great assembly of the noblemen of England being present. The parish clerk of old, deacon in orders, Chaucer has painted as a jolly Absalon, in a white surplice, with curly hair, red stockings, and fashionable shoes. He could bleed, clip and shave, write title-deeds and receipts, dance, sing, play the guitar, drink, go with a censer on a holiday, and, when he censed the parish wives, look at them lovingly. Herod suited the fine lady's man, as being the character that was most pompous in speech and most magnificently dressed. A high scaffold, doubtless, was the stage used by the parish clerks of London at their (Clerken) Well, about which the spectators stood and sat upon the rising ground.

The oldest series of English Mysteries that set forth "matter from the Creation of the World" to Doomsday were the plays acted in Chester at

The Chester Plays.

Whitsuntide. According to the proclamation for the holding of these plays made in the year 1533,* they were devised "of old time" "by one Sir Henry Francis, some time monk of this monastery dissolved," who got of Pope Clement a thousand days of pardon, and of the Bishop of Chester at that time forty days of pardon for every one

"resorting in peaceable manner and with good devotion to hear and see the said plays from time to time as oft as they shall be played within the said city . . . which plays were devised to the honour of God by John Arnway, then mayor of this city of Chester, his brethren, and the whole commonalty thereof, to be brought forth, declared, and played, at the cost and charges of the craftsmen and occupations of the said city, which hitherunto have from time to time used and performed the same accordingly."

A note, written in a later hand, adds to the MS. copy of this proclamation written at the end of the sixteenth century, that Sir John Arnway was mayor of Chester in 1327-8, at which time these plays were written by Randal Higgenet, a monk of Chester Abbey, and played openly in Whitsun week. Randal Higgenet is one of the corruptions of the name of Randulph or Ralph Higden, author of the "Polychronicon," yet to be spoken of. He was a West of England man who joined the Benedictines of St. Werburgh in Chester about the year 1299, and died at a good old age, probably in 1363.† There were in the Chester series twenty-four plays, distributed among the twenty-four companies of the city, and Archdeacon Rogers, who saw them acted in 1594 according to old usage, says‡ that they played the first nine

* Harleian MS. No. 2,013.

† P. xi. of the introduction to "Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden," edited by Churchill Babington, B.D., London (1865), in series of "Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages."

‡ MS. Harleian, No. 1,948, fol. 48. Quoted in Sharp's "Dissertation on Pageants."

on Whit Monday, the next nine on Tuesday, and the remaining six on Wednesday, and that

"the places where they played them were in every street. They began first at the Abbey gates, and when the first pageant was played, it was wheeled to the high cross before the Mayor, and so to every street; and so every street had a pageant playing before them at one time, till all the pageants for the day appointed were played: and when one pageant was near ended, word was brought from street to street, that so they might come in place thereof exceeding orderly."

There were scaffolds erected for spectators in those places to which the successive pageants would be drawn; and a citizen who on the first day saw in any place the first pageant (that of the Fall of Lucifer), if he kept his place and returned to it in good time on each successive morning, would see the Scripture story, as thus told, pass in its right order before him. Each pageant was drawn on four or six wheels, and had a room, in which the actors and properties were concealed, under the upper room or stage on which they played. Thus, in the

Chester Plays

first came the pageant of the Tanners, who set forth the Fall of Lucifer; that of the Drapers followed, with the Creation and Fall, and the Death of Abel—in which Eve was made out of the rib of Adam, and Adam and Eve were shown naked on the stage until they put on fig-leaves. As women's parts were played by men or boys, Eve, at least, must have had nakedness represented by a dress. One of the dramatic effects usually connected in old Mysteries with the play of the Creation was to represent the creation of beasts by unloosing and sending among the crowd as great a variety of strange animals as could be brought together, and to create the birds by sending up a flight of pigeons.

When that pageant went to the next station, the Water Leaders and the drawers of Dee came with their pageant of Noah's Flood, in which Noah's wife gave so much trouble to her husband.

This was followed by the Histories of Lot and Abraham, played by the Barbers and Wax-chandlers. Care was taken by the inventor to point

out, through an "Expositor," at the end of the show of Abraham's faith, that

> "This deed you see done here in this place,
> An example of Jesu done it was," &c.—

passing from this into a prayer beginning "Such obedience grant us, O Lord;" after which the messenger says—

> "Make room, lordings, and give us way,
> And let Balak come in and play,
> And Balaam that well can say
> To tell you of prophesy."

The Cappers and Linen-drapers played the tale of "Balaam and his Ass," which begins with God speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the giving of the Commandments. Then Balak was seen riding towards the mountain, and that part of the story was presented. Balaam's ass is called Burnell (the Brunellus of logic and satire), and is represented by a man made to have the appearance of an ass; and when all this story, in which Balaam blesses by prophecy of Christ, has also been presented, again "the Doctor speaketh."

The Chester series now comes at once to the Birth of our Lord, and represents in successive pageants the Salutation and Nativity, including Emperor Octavian and the Sibyl's prophecy of Christ, popular in the Middle Ages, with some additional narrative and comment by "the Expositor," and "the Play of the Shepherds," which was in and out of England the accepted opportunity for rustic jesting.

Here no expositor appears; but three shepherds make merry together, open their satchels, and, joining their suppers in a feast, eat hot meat with Lancashire bannocks, and drink Alton ale. They blow their horns for the comic lad, the ragged Trowle, who sings, but declares their meat too dirty to be eaten, and will have none of it till they give him his wages. They wrestle in sport with him, and he throws all three. While they sit to rest after their sport the star appears, by which they are impressed religiously. But when an angel presently has sung "Gloria in Excelsis," their sense of reverence in the first comment upon the singing rapidly passes into the usual burlesque, with questioning whether he sang "Glorē, glare with a glee," or "Glory, glory with a glo," or "Glori, glory, glorious;" whether he was a spy who came to steal their sheep; and so forth. They note "how he sang selsis," how he

"touched on terre," and "pax also may not be blamed." "Indeed," says the second shepherd,

> "He had a much better voice than I have,
> As in heaven all others have so."

Finally they go to Bethlehem, and sing their adoration to the infant Christ, offering Him, one a bell, another a flasket and a spoon "to eat Thy pottage withal at noon," the third shepherd a cap, and Trowle, too poor to do better, a pair of his wife's old breeches. After these, and gifts also by four boys, the shepherds depart, singing in pious mood, to spend their lives in worship. They give each other before going the Christian kiss of peace, one telling another that he knows not where there is such another shepherd "from London to Louth."

In the next pageant—that of the Three Kings—the Kings and Herod speak, at meeting, their first words of compliment in the court language—French. Because French was the language of the English court, the Chester playwright once or twice mimics life with a dash of it in royal talk. In the play of the Salutation, Emperor Octavian has also a few lines of French assigned to him. Herod sends for a doctor, the chief of his clergy, to look up the books of prophecy; and through his exposition, interrupted by the angry speeches of Herod, there is more instruction given to the hearers. The next play is "The Offerings of the Three Kings," after which follows the "Slaughter of the Innocents." Rude jesting certainly was not intended in the scolding of the mothers at the brutal soldiers, nor in their rough insolence. The spectators saw a homely picture of merciless oppression and wild natural passion. The killing of only two children is shown upon the stage. The second being one that has Herod himself for its father, there is an appeal to Herod, who, after wrath at his own child's murder, dies on the stage in pain. He is then fetched by a demon, who takes the opportunity to tell the citizens that they who give false measure will bear that lord company. At the end of this play Joseph and Mary go down to Egypt.

Then follow the pageants of the Purification, the Temptation, and the Woman taken in Adultery (these two being one play), which ends with a Doctor's exposition. The next play, that of "Lazarus," opens with our Lord giving sight to the blind, and His vanishing from among the Jews who would stone Him, setting all this forth not less fully than the raising of Lazarus. The Entry into Jerusalem, Christ Betrayed, the Passion, the Crucifixion, the Harrowing of Hell (from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus), the Resurrection the Pilgrims of

Emmaus, the Ascension, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, are successively shown in the next pageants. Then there appear in a pageant Ezekiel, Zachariah, Daniel, and John the Evangelist, who tell visions of theirs, which an "Expositor" stands by to expound to the people. They are Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, prefiguring Doomsday; Zachariah's four chariots out of two hills, signifying four kinds of saints—martyrs, confessors, converts, virgins; Daniel's vision of four winds and four beasts, prefiguring Doomsday and Antichrist. The Expositor instructs the people concerning John's two witnesses Enoch and Elias, his prophecy of Antichrist, and of the fifteen signs that shall come before the Judgment Day.* Thus prefaced there follow the last two pageants, which are those of Antichrist and the Day of Judgment. Antichrist, claiming to be Christ, dies on the stage, is buried, and rises to life again; whereby he wins worship until Enoch and Elias come to expose him to the deluded kings, and to destroy his errors. They call on him to show that the dead he has raised can eat, and, when he assents to the trial, give them bread blessed in the name of Jesus, which they dare not touch. The kings of the earth then turn to the true Christ. Antichrist slays them with a sword, he slays also Enoch and Elias† before he returns towards his chair of state, but there he is met by the Archangel Michael, who with a sword kills him. Antichrist dies, calling upon Satan and Lucifer. Two demons come for him, Enoch and Elias rise again, and are taken by Michael into heaven, while an angel sings *Gaudete, justi, in Domino.*

The last of the five-and-twenty pageants—Doomsday—then opens with Christ as God, Alpha and Omega, sending the angels to blow the last trumpet. The dead rise and speak. First the saved speak: a pope who has been purged in Purgatory of his sins of negligence; an emperor who describes also his cleansing in pains of Purgatory for a thousand years; a king whom only contrition at the last and almsdeed saved from hell; a queen also who had neither prayed nor fasted, but had lived in luxury, and was saved only by almsdeed, by repentance at the close of life, and pains of Purgatory. Then speak the damned:—A pope who was in life covetous, who prospered by silver and simony, has account to give of all souls that were lost while he held rule. After him speak next the damned emperor, and king, and queen. After them a justice who is damned because he furthered the false cause of the rich who gave him silver, troubled the poor, and robbed the Church. Lastly, there speaks a merchant who oppressed the poor to make them part with their lands, a thousand times swore falsely to win by false

* "E. W." III. 352. † "E. W." II. 97, 98.

dealings, was a usurer, and never went to church. After these laments, Jesus descends as in a cloud, angels showing His cross, His crown of thorns, the lance, and other instruments. As He addresses the assembled souls, blood flows afresh from His side. The saved—speaking through pope, emperor, king, and queen—call to Him, and are accepted, for

> "In great thirst you gave me drink,
> When I was naked also clothing,
> And when me needed harbouring
> You harboured me in cold;
> And other deeds to my liking
> You did on earthé there living,
> Therefore you shall be quit that thing
> In heaven an hundred-fold."

They answer according to the text "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered?" and are replied to with a paraphrase of our Lord's answer, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me." The angels conduct with song the blessed souls to heaven. Then the demons come, and are the accusers of the wicked pope and emperor, and of the king and queen, who

> "Would never know
> Pooré men them alms to show,"

and of the rest of the evildoers who are to be parted from the good and put into great torment. They are told by the Last Judge that they are condemned, and that the prayers of His mother and all the saints would be too late to help them. Then is repeated the condemnation "When I was hungry and thirsty," with the question and the answer,

> "Nay, when you saw the least of mine
> That on earthé suffered pine . . ."

So they are condemned, and taken away by the demons. After this the Evangelists come forward and bear witness that, as their Gospels have warned all to save their souls, and shown the way to heaven, there is no excuse for those who do amiss.

These plays, it will have been seen, are in eight-syllabled verse. In the opening pageant of the Fall of Lucifer alternate rhyming is predominant, otherwise the general metre is the ballad metre of Chaucer's "Rime of Sir

Thopas," with triplets in place of the couplets. It forms eight-lined stanzas, consisting of two triplets of rhyme, with a third rhyme thus arranged, each rhyme being represented by a letter—a, a, a, c, b, b, b, c. Sometimes both triplets have the same rhyme, making the form a, a, a, c, a, a, a, c. Taking two lines as one, the usual metre of the Chester Plays will fall into a popular four-lined ballad stanza with rhymes at the cesura. Thus—

Eve.

"Ah! Lord, this tree is fair and bright, green and seemly to my sight,
The fruit sweet and full of might, that gods it may us make:
One apple of it I will eat, to assay which is the meat,
And my husband I will get one morsel for to take."

There is occasional dramatic use of some other metre, as in a shepherd's song or in bombast of Herod, but this is, as a rule, the metre of the Chester Plays.

There are several MSS. of the Chester Mysteries, none early. A MS. belonging to the Duke of Devonshire is dated 1581. A MS. once possessed by Mr. Heber was dated 1592. The two MSS. in the British Museum are dated 1600 and 1607; that at Oxford is dated 1604. A specimen of these Chester Mysteries was printed in 1818 by Mr. Markland for the members of the Roxburghe Club, and in 1831 these and other Mysteries, then unpublished, were described by Mr. Collier in his "History of Dramatic Literature;" but the only complete publication of them has been that made for the Shakespeare Society in 1843, when they were edited by Mr. Thomas Wright.

Though not remarkable for wit or poetry, they brought, in rude popular verse, the scriptural teaching of a thoroughly religious mind home to the people. The comic interludes occurred in appointed places, but the whole teaching of these plays was devoutly earnest. There is one misplaced jest in the

Spirit of the English Miracle Plays.

serious close of the Shepherds' Play; misplaced according to the notions which in England evidently prevailed among Mystery writers. In the Wakefield (Towneley) series, by far the cleverest of the four that have come down to us, there are dramatic touches of natural poetry, and interludes of bold and hearty farce; but even here the jesting of the Shepherds' Play is not allowed to cross the threshold of the stable in which the infant Christ is laid. The series called the Coventry is altogether serious, except for a familiar treatment of one incident in the story of the Virgin Mary, to whom it clearly was the purpose of the writer to pay special honour.

In England, I repeat, as in Germany, the chief interest of these plays was tragic; even the more so, in their actual representation, for the homeliness that sought to realise to the illiterate the sense of every incident. They were the living "Biblia Pauperum." It does not appear that in France all the trades of a town combined to carry out this form of the work of bringing home that mediæval reading of the Bible to the common people. In France the sequences of plays seem to have been shorter, being produced by a single corporation, civil or religious. In France also the use of three stages, one above another, to represent heaven, earth, and hell—a custom followed in none of these English plays—kept the devils present to the eye, and nearest also to the audience. When they had no real part in the action of the scene they would divert attention by irrelevant gesticulations. Thus they degenerated into drolls. But in our English plays devils only appeared when there was God to be resisted, man to be warned or tempted, or a sinner to be dragged to hell. The whole endeavour was to make them terrible.

In the Netherlands such peasant comedies as that of which the Shepherds' Play preceding the Nativity was an example were acted in the market-place on Saturday between

Good Friday and Easter Sunday. On Good Friday the scenes of the Passion were represented in the church, on Easter Day the Resurrection, and out of doors on the intervening Saturday there came into the throng of the fair that gathered about every great church celebration criers who sold salves to women dressed as the three Marys, while—always with some ultimate reference to the sacred time—there were acted in the open market peasant comedies with thumping and abuse.* So when the Nativity was acted in church on Christmas morning, the shepherds' plays may have been at their beginning acted out of doors on Christmas Eve.

The Wakefield (or Woodkirk) Mysteries were first printed by the Surtees Society in 1836 † as "The Towneley Mysteries," so called because the only MS. in which they

* "Altteutsche Schauspiele. Herausgegeben von Franz Joseph Mone. Quedlenberg und Leipzig, 1841." [Bd. xxi. of "Bibliothek der gesammten deutschen National Literatur."] This includes a German play of the "Resurrection" from a MS. of 1391. I may add that a *Ludus Paschalis de Adventu et Interitu Antichristi*, by Wernhers von Tegernsee, is of the twelfth century, the oldest piece of the kind extant in German (printed by Pez in "Thesaur. Noviss. Anecdot.," ii. 185, *et seq.*). In Italy the oldest mention of a Mystery Play is in a MS. of the *Regimines Paduæ*, which notes a solemn representation of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ in 1244 in the open air of the Prà della Valle. The oldest Italian Mystery Play known to be extant was found by Signor Palermo among the MSS. of the Palatine Library at Florence; it is in two parts, called "Devozioni," and was played within the church on Thursday and Good Friday, the preacher in his sermon explaining the action by which it was illustrated. The MS. is dated, "Here ends the Devozion of Good Friday, 1375," but the character and dialect of the play point to an origin in the earlier half of the fourteenth century ("Palermo, I Manoscritti Palatini,' T. ii., p. 459, quoted through Ebert in Bd. v., pp. 51—79 of *Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur*).

† "The Towneley Mysteries," Surtees Society (1836); edited by the Secretary of the Society, James Raine; the preface by J. Hunter.

are contained belonged to the library collected by the Towneley family at Towneley Hall in Lancashire. The library was sold in 1814 and 1815, and this MS. passed out of the possession of the Towneley family, but was recovered by it before 1822, when Mr. Peregrine Edward Towneley printed from it the "Judicium" (Doomsday) as his contribution to the Roxburghe Club.

The Wakefield (Wood kirk) or "Towneley Mysteries."

There is no sufficient reason why these plays should be named not, like the Chester and Coventry, after the town for which they may have been written, but after somebody who happens to possess a copy of them. When the MS. was described by Francis Douce for the sale in 1814 he said, on grounds not stated, that it was supposed to have "formerly belonged to the Abbey of Widkirk, near Wakefield, in the county of York." In 1822, in an introduction written by him for the "Doomsday," Douce said it was supposed to have belonged to the Abbey of Whalley—this guess probably being substituted because he could find no such place as Widkirk. In the preface to the edition for the Surtees Society it is pointed out that Francis Douce must have had some old written authority for his first supposition, because, although there is no such place as Widkirk near Wakefield, and never was an Abbey of Widkirk in England, there is, four miles north of Wakefield, Woodkirk, where there used to be a cell of Augustinian canons, which was established in the first half-century after the Conquest, and dependent on the great house of St. Oswald at Nostel. Moreover, Henry I. granted the canons of Nostel a charter for two fairs to be held at Woodkirk (one at the Feast of the Assumption, the other at the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin)—a grant confirmed by King Stephen. In Henry VIII.'s time the tolls and stallage of these fairs yielded more than a fourth of the yearly revenues of the house. Mr. Hunter adds that although the Mysteries in this collection differ among one

another, and perhaps were from different hands, some original, others from similar collections elsewhere (Cæsar Augustus, Pharaoh, and the Annunciation containing no trace of a Yorkshire dialect)—in some, of which the language is that of common life and country clowns, the dialect is unmistakably northern. In the "Death of Abel" and the two plays here given to the shepherds watching in the fields, who heard the "Gloria" sung in the heavens, especially in the second of them, "few persons," he says, "who have had any opportunities of hearing the language of the rural population of the West Riding of Yorkshire can fail to trace it."

The MS. also contains indications of locality in the inscription "Wakefelde Berkers" (Tanners) at the head of the first of the pageants, and Wakefield again, without the name of a trade, at the head of the third pageant. Three other of the pageants (Abel, Pharaoh, and the appearance of Jesus to Luke and Cleophas) are marked with the name of a trade that acted them without note of a place. As Woodkirk itself could have had no guilds, the inference is obvious that the trades of Wakefield were the actors of these plays. In the second play of the shepherds, one of them says he has searched Horbery Shroggs. Horbury is a village two or three miles south-west of Wakefield; and Shroggs is a northern term for a rough open, overgrown with brushwood.

* These examples are given:—"Umbithynke thee what thou saysse," "æther," "Let it be," "be pease your dyn;" "hoille," "go forth, greyn horne," "Leming," as a cow's name; "here my hend" (hand), "other-gates," "a craw to pluck," "lig" (lie), "mon" (must), "fun" (found), "pik" (pitch), "sam," "dedir," "skelp," "bir," "mydyng," "chyldre," "barme" (bosom), "kyn," "kythe and kyn," "near hand," "balk," "whet hir whystyll," "lake," "threpe," "eaten out of house and harbour," "what alys thee;" not all peculiar to the West Riding, but "more frequently to be heard there than in any other district."

The Wakefield Plays

are a series of thirty-two; eight of them are from the Old Testament, and four-and-twenty from the New. The first play is of the Creation. Here, between the creations of the fifth and sixth day, God having withdrawn, Lucifer takes his seat, claiming to be master of the new-made world. Before the return of God he takes a flight, while fallen angels lament the joys lost through pride. Lucifer returns after the creation of Adam and Eve, resolved to cast them out of Paradise; and at this point four leaves of the MS. seem to be lost.

The second pageant is that of the Death of Abel, which opens with the entry of Cain's boy (Garcio, *garçon*), who addresses the people as "a mery lad." Cain, formed upon the coarsest model of a Yorkshire ploughman, enters shouting to his plough-team, and, after a short rough dialogue with his man, gives a coarse greeting to Abel when he enters. Abel reasons. Cain reviles, and will not leave his plough to go to make offering, till after much persuasion. Abel offers, with short pious prayer. Avaricious Cain grudgingly counts over his sheaves, that he may look out for God the one he is least unwilling to part with. He contemns God in bold language, and his brother too, when the grudged sacrifice smokes without burning. Then Abel is slain. God calls to Cain, who thinks it of no use to ask for mercy. He summons his boy, Pyke-harnes: when he comes, tells him there is a pudding in the pot, buffets him, and cries the king's peace for himself and the lad, who caps with burlesque each line that he utters. Finally he threatens the boy roughly if he do not mind the plough, and goes away to hide himself, with a farewell to the public, whom he tells that he must needs be thrall to the devil, world without end. The mediæval Yorkshire rustic, seeing this play, found in Cain what he thoroughly understood to be an ill-conditioned fellow and a hopeless reprobate.

The third pageant is of Noah, who opens it with a long prayer. God, replying at length, repents that He has made man, and commands the ark to be built. After this, Noah goes home to his wife, who scolds him for having been so long away from home, complains of poverty, and tells him that he is worthy to be clad in Stafford blue, for he is always dreading something. She scolds on, and he threatens to beat her. She retorts; and he cries, "Have at thee, Gill!" She strikes again, and has the worst of a short fight. Then he proceeds, old and stiff of bone, to the ark-building. His sons presently help to carry his goods in, but his wife will not stir. In this play she is resolved first to do some spinning. Noah and his three sons' wives

urge her to notice the overcast sky and the rain, but her answer is still

> "In fayth yet wille I spyn,
> Alle in vayn ye carp."

"This spindle will I slip, upon this hill, ere I stir a foot." Noah threatens her with the whip. She answers that his great words shall not fray her. He threatens on, and she provokes him with her tongue Presently there is another fight between them. The wife cries out "Alas!" and is beaten blue, but Noah lies undermost with his back near in two. The three sons expostulate with their father and mother, and Noah says—

> "We wille do as ye bid us, we wille be no more wroth,
> Dere barnes!
> Now to the helme wille I hent,*
> And to my ship tent."†

So they go in. The waves are supposed to rise. Forty days are passed in the course of a few lines; then three hundred and *fifty* days. The raven and dove are sent out, the floods subside, and Noah and his family come out on the green earth bare of mankind.

The sacrifice of Abraham is the next subject represented, with the same desire to realise the story, but with more dignity and some natural pathos.

For example—

Isaac. When I am dede, and closed in clay,
Who shalle then be youre son?
Abraham. A, Lord, that I shuld abide this day.
Isaac. Sir, who shalle do that I was won?‡
Abraham. Speke no siche wordes, son, I the pray.
Isaac. Shalle ye me slo?
Abraham. I trow I mon;
Lyg stille, I smyte.
Isaac. Sir, let me say.
Abraham. Now, my dere child, thou may not shon.
Isaac. The shynyng of youre bright blayde
It gars me quake for ferd to dee.
Abraham. Therfor groflynges thou shalle be layde,
Then when I stryke thou shalle not se.

* Seize. † Take heed. ‡ Accustomed to do.

Isaac. What have I done, fader? What have I saide?
Abraham. Truly, no kyns ille to me.
Isaac. And thus gyltles shalle be arayde.
Abraham. Now, good son, let siche wordes be.
Isaac. I luf you ay.
Abraham. So do I thee.
Isaac. Fader!
Abraham. What, son?
Isaac. Let now be seyn
For my moder luf.
Abraham. Let be, let be!
It wille not help that thou wold meyn;
Bot ly stylle tille I com to the
I mys a lytylle thyng I weyn.

He turns aside to weep and think what he shall say to the boy's mother, while the obedient child makes no attempt to escape—

"He lyys fulle stille there as he lay,
For to I com dar he not styr."

The close of this pageant is wanting from the single MS. which contains these Mysteries, and so is the opening of the next play, "Isaac," and the supplanting by Jacob of Esau's birthright. The story of Jacob's ladder, his return out of Haran, his wrestling with the angel, and the kiss at meeting with Esau is the next subject. From the trial of the Faith of Abraham through these plays we pass to that in which Moses (who repeats the Ten Commandments), David, the Sybil, and Daniel speak to show how the line of the prophets leads to Christ. Then the play of "Pharaoh" represents the plagues of Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites. In all these, though the wrath of Pharaoh has much homeliness of expression, there is no grotesque admixture of the comedy of common life.

These are the Old Testament pageants in the Wakefield or Woodkirk series. The New Testament series begins with Cæsar Augustus on his throne. He is told of a child to be born that shall put down his power. He sends, committed to the keeping of Mahowne, a messenger to fetch Sir Syren (Luke's Cyrenius), and the messenger is shown first summoning, then bringing, him to court. Sir Syren counsels that the child be put to death when found, and that the messenger be sent from town to town to command every man to bring Cæsar a penny as tribute and do homage to him. The messenger goes, Cæsar swearing

by Mahound to make a knight of him when he has well fulfilled his errand. The next plays are the "Annunciation" (in which the story is told partly by dialogue between Joseph and Mary, partly by a long narrative monologue of Joseph's) and the "Salutation" of Elizabeth, simply treated.

Then follows the usual comic entertainment of the "Shepherds," in two plays, of which either might be acted. The first play opens with a shepherd bewailing the hardships of life; he has lost all his cattle, and is on his way to the fair to buy more. A second shepherd, in a like speech, prays that God will keep them from boasters and braggarts, "that with thare long dagers dos mekylle wo." Then the two begin clownish talk by hailing and recognising one another—

"How, Gyb, good morne; wheder goys thou?
Thou goys over the corne, Gyb, I say, how!

First Shepherd. Who is that? John Horne! I make God a vowe;
I say not in skorne, Thom, how farys thou?
Second Shepherd. Hay, ha!
Are ye in this toune?
First Shepherd. Yey, by my crowne.
Second Shepherd. I thoght by your gowne
This was youre aray."

Presently they are in dispute about the pasture-ground, when a third shepherd comes, who finds that while they have been quarrelling about the pasture they have lost sight of the sheep they were to feed. After homely jests, they all three produce good suppers from their wallets and sit to eat. Then after such mirth as their supper could yield, when they are going home, the angel sings and the star appears. After this, instead of returning quickly into jest, as the shepherds do in the Chester Mystery, they begin to prophesy of Christ, one of them even quoting Virgil's lines—

"Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna:
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto" (Ecl. iv. 6, 7)—

received in those days as a prophecy of Christ. But presently they do pass for a short time into jest, for the sake of introducing the shepherds' burlesque upon the singing of the angels, before they go to present their gifts—a box, a ball, and a bottle. These presented, they depart with a few serious words.

The other Shepherds' Play, which might be used in place of this, is

the most interesting of all Miracle Plays that have come down to us. Omit the angels' song and the Adoration, and there remains a farce with a plot. It is a rough picture of real life, no doubt, but real life mirrored in a dramatic story, a true little Drama, and the earliest that is to be found in our language. Its sentiments show it to be the work of a man whose sympathies were strongly with the people. It begins, like the other Shepherds' Play in the collection, with the speeches or songs of two shepherds. The first shepherd wakes cold from sleep—

"I am nere hande dold, so long have I nappyd;
My legys they fold, my fyngers ar chappyd."

He is not happy—

"We ar so hamyd,
For-taxed and ramyd,
We are mayde hand tamyd
Withe thyse gentlery men.
Thus thay refe us oure rest, oure Lady theym wary,*
These men that ar lordfest they cause the ploghe tary.
* * * * *
Ther shalle com a swane as prowde as a po,
He must borow my wane, my ploghe also,
Then I am fulle fane to graunt or he go.
Thus lyf we in payne, anger, and wo,
By nyght and day."

The second shepherd complains, too, of the frost—so hideous that it makes his eyes water; and his complaint is of discomfort, not in the world, but in the home; for he has a wife

"As sharp as thystylle, as rugh as a brere,
She is browyd lyke a brystylle, with a sowre loten chere;
Had she oones wett hyr whystyll she couth syng fulle clere
Hyr pater noster.
She is as greatt as a whalle,
She has a galon of galle."

The two shepherds then begin to talk together, one asking the other "Saghe thou awro of Daw?" Daw comes, as a third shepherd, and his complaint is of the great floods—

* Curse (F.E "werigean").

"Was never syn Noe floodé sich floodés seyn,
Wyndés and ranye so rude, and stormés so keyn,
Som stamerd, som stod in dowte, as I weyn,
Now God turne alle to good, I say as I mene,
For ponder,
These floodes so thay drowne,
Both in feyldes and in towne,
And berys alle downe,
And that is a wonder."

He asks the other two for drink and dinner; they reply with rough jest—

"Thoughe the shrew cam late
Yit is he in state
To dyne, if he had it."

He retorts with satire on the grudged bread of such servants as he, who are often wet and weary while their masters sleep, and get their dinners and drinks "fulle lately." The two shepherds ask where their sheep are, and Daw answers that they have been all day at good pasture in the corn. This being satisfactory, they are about to take tenor, treble, and bass in a song, when Mak enters with a cloak over his dress, wishing himself in heaven. He is recognised. One of them takes his cloak, and he jestingly calls himself a yeoman of the king sent from a great lord. He must have reverence. He says, "Why, who be I?"

They comment on his making it so quaint. He proceeds with his jest. He shall make complaint of them.

They threaten the jester, and one asks him what will men suppose? He walks late, and is in ill credit for sheep-stealing.

He is true as steel, he says, but has a sickness in his belly. He is sore and ill if he doesn't walk.

One asks after his wife.

She lies by the fire, he says, with a house full of brood; a new child every year, and some years two.

Presently the shepherds go to sleep, but cause Mak to lie down between two of them. When they are fast asleep Mak rises, steals a fat sheep, and is immediately knocking at his own door. His wife Gyll, letting him in, finds that he who knocks is her sweeting, though, she says, "by the nakyd nek art thou lyke for to hyng."

Mak. Do way:
I am worthy my mete,
For in a strate I can gett
More then thay that swynke and swette
Alle the long day.

And then, showing the sheep he has just stolen—

Thus it felle to my lott, Gylle, I had sich grace.
Uxor. It were a fowlle blott to be hanged for the case.
Mak. I have skapyd, Jelott, oft as hard a glase.
Uxor. Bot so long goys the pott to the water, men says,
At last
Comys it home broken.
Mak. Welle knowe I the token,
Bot let it never be spoken;
Bot com and help fast.
I would he were flayn; I lyst welle ete:
This twelmothe was I-not so fayn of oone shepe mete.
Uxor. Com thay or he be slayn, and here the shepe blete?
Mak. Then myght I be tane: that were a cold swette.
Go spar
The gayt doore.
Uxor. Yis, Mak,
For and thay com at thy bak.

The wife has an idea. Till the shepherds are gone she will hide the sheep in a cradle, lie in bed, and feign that it is her new-born babe.

While the shepherds are yet sleeping, Mak has crept into his place between them. They presently awake, each in a different mood, the writer expressing with dramatic instinct his sense of the difference of temperament shown in the awaking out of sleep. They had had dreams, too. One dreamt he had seen Mak in a wolf-skin; another had dreamt of his stealing a fat sheep noiselessly; but there he was, and seemed to be in such deep slumber that it was not easy to rouse him. He has been dreaming, he says, that his wife Gyll gave him increase to his own flock.

"Wo is hym has many barnes
And therto lytylle brede.
I must go home, by your lefe, to Gylle as I thoght.
I pray you look my slefe, that I steylle noght:
I am loth you to grefe, or from you take oght."

Mak goes to his wife's door after the shepherds have agreed to count their sheep again and meet at the crooked thorn. Mak tells his wife that the shepherds are about to count their sheep, and when they miss one they will make a foul noise and cry out upon him; wherefore she must do as she said. They prepare accordingly in Mak's house, while outside the shepherds meet and cry out over their loss of a fat wether.

Tercius Pastor. A, Colle, goode morne; why slepys thou nott?
Primus Pastor. Alas, that ever I was borne! we have a fowlle blott.
A fat weder have we lorne.
Tercius Pastor. Mary, Godes forbott.
Secundus Pastor. Who shuld do us that skorne? That were a fowle spott.
Primus Pastor. Some shrew
I have soght with my doges
Alle Horbery shroges
And of xv hoges
Fond I but oone ewe.

Mak's house ought to be searched; presently they are all clamouring at the door of it. Then the jest is carried out. The wife, groaning in bed, cries to the shepherds—

"I pray to God so mylde—
If ever I you begyld
That I ete this chylde
That lyges in this credylle."

Believing their sheep to have been killed, the shepherds look in vain for signs of meat in the house. Presently they are going, and Mak is triumphantly bidding them farewell at the door, when says one of them to another—

Primus Pastor. Gaf ye the chyld any thyng?
Secundus Pastor. I trow not oone farthyng.
Tercius Pastor. Fast agayne wille I flyng,
Abyde ye me there.
Mak, take it no gref'e if I come to thi barne.
Mak. Nay, thou does me greatt reprefe, and fowlle has thou farne.
Tercius Pastor. The child wille it not grefe, that lytylle day-starne.
Mak, with your lefe, let me gyf youre barne
Bot vj pence.

Mak. Nay, do way: he slepys.
Tercius Pastor. Me thynk he pepys.
Mak. When he wakyns he wepys.
I pray you, go hence.
Tercius Pastor. Gyf me lefe him to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.
What the dewille is this? He has a long snowte.

The other shepherds look also, and see the trick; but Mak and Gyll brazen it out. A shepherd says—

"Wylle ye se how thay swedylle
His foure feytt in the medylle?
Sagh I never in a credylle
A hornyd lad or now."

Mak cries—

"Pease byd I. What! lett be youre fare!
I am he that hym gatt, and yond woman hym bare."

When other protestations fail, Mak's wife hits on a new plea for her "pratty child," her "dylly downe":—

"He was takyn with an elfe:
I saw it myself.
When the clok stroke twelf
Was he forshapyn."

The story, of course, ends with the thrashing of Mak by the shepherds, who lay on till they are tired; and when they lie down to rest after their exertions, the angel sings the "Gloria." The peasants comment in the usual way, with burlesque, upon his singing, then speak of prophecy, go to Bethlehem, and adore the new-born child. One offers "a bob of cherries," one a bird, and the other a tennis-ball.

The next play, on the offering of the Magi, opens with the boastful Herod, who tells the people—

"Who that makes noyse whyls I am here,
I saye, shalle dy."

The entry of the three kings is on horseback. The Flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt is the next topic.

Then follows the Massacre of the Innocents, which is strongly dwelt upon, with active conflict between the soldiers and three mothers. This is made incidental to a large display of the Great

Herod, cousin to Mahowne, who takes, after all his boast and cruelty, a mild departure from the scene with—

> "Begyn I to rekyn I thynk alle disdayn
> For daunche.
> Sirs, this is my counselle,
> Bese not to cruelle
> Bot adew to the devylle;
> I can no more Franche."

That is to say, "My business is brag and cruelty. Take, though it is out of character, this bit of advice from me. I can give you no more of courtly speech." Between the next two plays, the "Purification of Mary" and "Christ with the Doctors in the Temple," a leaf or more of the MS. is lost. Then, after a play on "John the Baptist," we come at once to the closing series. In the conspiracy against and taking of Christ, Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas join counsel against Him, Judas offers to betray, the Passover is prepared, and the rest of the Scripture story is told to the taking of Christ in the garden. The next play, opening with a dialogue between tormentors, shows Christ before Annas and Caiaphas. The tormenting of Christ is most painfully dwelt upon, being presented to the eyes of the spectators in this pageant and the next, called the "Flagellation," which continues the Scripture story to the forming of the procession to the Crucifixion. No mistake can be greater than to suppose that the rude cruelty of the tormentors in such scenes was meant to have comic effect. In the next play the Crucifixion itself is presented with the merciless tormentors still for leading characters, the act of crucifying being elaborated with sickening detail that seems to lay open the horrors of a mediæval torture-chamber. Christ is racked on the cross before it is uplifted and set in its mortice, to stand like a mast. The Scripture story is continued in this pageant to the bearing of Christ's body to the tomb. The next play (of the "Dice") opens with Pontius Pilate magnifying himself and proving himself a Roman, with bits of Latin oddly stirred into his speech. The tormentors dispute before him over the Lord's robe. Dice are thrown for it, and from the one who wins Pilate asks for it in a way that cannot be refused. Thus all lose, and end with preachment against dicing. The next play is of the "Harrowing of Hell," upon which follow the "Resurrection," and the "Walk to Emmaus." The next, inscribed "Thomas of India," tells of our Lord's other appearances, and of the incredulity of Thomas. Last come, with a small portion

of the MS. wanting between them, the "Ascension" and the "Day of Judgment," except that a play of "Lazarus" is added, and in a more modern hand a speech of Judas when he hangs himself.

The metres of the Wakefield Mysteries are more various and irregular than those of the Chester or Coventry series, and more freely broken up into dialogue by the dramatic spirit of the writers. But in the York Plays there is also great variety of metre. It is evident also that the Wakefield plays are not, as those of the other sets appear to be, the production of one wit. They vary among each other in style, language, and dramatic power. Five of them seem to have been borrowed from the York series, and there may have been other borrowings from sets now lost. Even the Chester and Coventry plays, as showing the mind of the main body of the English people in the completeness with which they gave the Bible story to be communicated by laymen to laymen, have, I believe, no existing parallel in any foreign literature; and these north-country Mysteries, in which the heart of the commonalty was set beating in close contact to the heart of its religion, must stand at the head of a form of literature which, for about three centuries, was one of the liveliest expressions of a main part of the mind of the English people.

The York Plays.

Performance of the series of Mystery Plays acted at the festival of Corpus Christi by the guilds of York began in Micklegate before the gates of the Priory of Holy Trinity, and in that priory a register was kept of the text of the plays performed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and discontinued about the year 1580. After the dissolution of the priory in the year 1538, the MS. of the Register of Plays was in the hands of the Corporation. Afterwards it came into possession of the Fairfax family, and in 1695 it was "H. Fairfax's book." Henry Fairfax gave it to Ralph Thoresby, who mentioned it

in his "History of Leeds." In 1764, at the sale of Thoresby's library, Horace Walpole bought the MS. of the York Mystery Plays for a guinea. When Horace Walpole's books were sold, Thomas Rodd, the bookseller, bought this volume for £220 10s., and he sold it again, in 1842, to Mr. Heywood Bright, of Bristol, for £235. In 1844 it was bought for £305 by another purchaser, from whom it passed by the next sale into the library of the Earl of Ashburnham. There it is now; and Lord Ashburnham having granted free use of it for publication by the Clarendon Press, it was published in 1885, thoroughly edited, with an introduction and glossary by an accomplished student of our early literature, Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith.* The editor suggests that the years 1430–1440 may include the date of the MS., which evidently had its origin in a desire to copy into one volume the several plays used by the guilds. The copyist began with the third play, occasionally confused his texts, made other blunders, and gave a touch of his own midland to a transcript from the northern dialect.

The order of the plays in the register corresponds so nearly with a list of the plays, and of the crafts that acted them, made out by Roger Burton, town clerk of York, and dated 1415, that the copyist may be supposed to have taken Roger Burton's list as guide, substituting later forms for some of the old names of trades. There are nine more plays in Roger Burton's list than in the MS. now published; three being omitted — namely, the Marriage at

* "York Plays. The Plays performed by the Crafts or Mysteries of York on the Day of Corpus Christi, in the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Centuries; now first printed from the Unique Manuscript in the Library of Lord Ashburnham. Edited, with Introduction and Glossary, by Lucy Toulmin Smith, Editor of 'Ricart's Kalendar,' 'Ingleby's Centurie of Prayse,' 'Gorboduc,' &c." (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1885). For what is said of the MS. of the "York Plays" I am indebted to Miss Toulmin Smith's Introduction to this volume.

Cana, Jesus in the House of Simon, and Fergus (one name for a wicked Jew who attacked the bier of the Virgin)—while ten more are, by combinations of two or three into one, reduced to four. Richard Burton added to his list of plays a copy of the Proclamation that announced them, and from this we learn that the players were required to be at their posts by half-past four in the morning to begin their rounds.

The earliest mention of the plays found in the books of the York Corporation is dated 1378, and refers to them as an established institution.* The control of the Corporation was indicated at York by the previous planting of banners with the city arms upon the spots appointed as the stations for the pageants.

The number of plays in the MS. of the York series is forty-eight, and five of these are found also in the Wakefield series, which seems to have been the borrower. The five are those which represent—Israel in Egypt and the Passage of the Red Sea; Christ with the Doctors in the Temple; the Harrowing of Hell; the Resurrection; and the Day of Judgment.

The order of the whole York series is this:—1, Creation and Fall of Lucifer (acted by the Barkers, who were traders in bark to the tanners); 2, Five Days of Creation (by the Plasterers); 3, the Sixth Day of Creation (by the Card makers, who were makers of cards for carding wool); 4, Adam and Eve in Eden (by the Fullers); 5, the Fall (by the Coopers); 6, the Expulsion from Eden (by the Armourers); 7, the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel (by the Glovers);

* ". . . . . Certain fines incurred by the Bakers were ordered to go—half to the City Chamber, half 'a la pagine des ditz Pestours de corporé cristi.' . . . . . In 1394 it was ordered by the mayor, bailiffs, and commonalty assembled in the Gildhall, that all the pageants should play in the places appointed of old time (*antiquitus assignatis*)." Miss Toulmin Smith's Introduction, pp. xxxi., xxxii.

8, Building the Ark (by the Shipwrights); 9, the Flood (by the Fishers and Mariners); 10, Abraham's Sacrifice (by the Parchmyners—dealers in parchment—and Bookbinders); 11, Israel in Egypt and the Passage of the Red Sea (by the Hosiers). This ended the Old Testament series. Then followed—12, the Annunciation, including prophecies of Christ's coming, and the visit of Elizabeth to Mary (by the Spicers); 13, Joseph's Trouble about Mary (by the Pewterers and Founders); 14, the Birth of Christ (by the Tilethatchers); 15, the Shepherds' Play (by the Chandlers); this follows the usual lines, but is simply treated, and the rustic element is wholly subordinated to the religious purpose. Three shepherds discourse—first, of the prophecies of Christ's coming; then they express rustic surprise at the vision of a star in the East, and an angel who brings tidings:—

> "An aungell brought vs tythandes newe
> A babe in Bedlem shulde be borne,
> Of whom þan spake our prophicie trewe,
> And bade us mete hym þare this morne,
> þat mylde of mode.
> I walde giffe hym bothe hatte and horne,
> And I myght fynde þat frely foode."

The shepherds go to Bethlehem, adore, and make their simple offerings—a brooch with a tin bell, two cobnuts on a ribbon, and a horn spoon that will hold forty peas. The next play, the sixteenth (by the Masons), shows the Coming of the Three Kings to Herod; the next, 17 (by the Goldsmiths), their Adoration. Then follow, 18, the Flight into Egypt (by the Marshals, men who shod horses and treated their ailments); 19, the Massacre of the Innocents (by the Girdlers and Nailers); 20, Christ with the Doctors in the Temple (by the Spurriers and by the Lorimers, who were makers of horses' bits); 21, Christ's Baptism (acted by the Barbers); 22, His Temptation (acted by the Smiths); 23,

the Transfiguration (by the Curriers). Next follow (24), the Woman taken in Adultery, and the Raising of Lazarus, shown by the Capmakers. The Skinners presented (25) the Entry into Jerusalem; the Cutlers (26) the Conspiracy to take Jesus; the Bakers (27) the Last Supper; the Cordwainers (28) the Agony and Betrayal. Peter's Denial of Jesus, and Jesus before Caiaphas (29), were presented by the Bowers and Fletchers, bow and arrow makers. Jesus before Pilate, with the Dream of Pilate's wife (30), was the play of the Tapestry Makers and Couch Coverers; Jesus before Herod (31), was shown by the Lytsteres, or candle makers; the Second Accusation before Pilate, and the Remorse of Judas (32), were shown by the Cooks and Water Carriers; and the Tilemakers continued that pageant with another play (33), showing the Judgment on Jesus. Then the thirty-fourth play, by the Shearmen, showed the Procession to Calvary; the thirty-fifth, by the Pinners and Painters, showed the Crucifixion; the next three, to the thirty-eighth, are the *Mortificatio Christi*, acted by the Butchers; the Harrowing of Hell, acted by the Saddlers; and the Resurrection, by the Carpenters. The Wine Drawers (39) represented Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalen after the Resurrection; the Sledmen, or porters (40), the Walk to Emmaus; the Hatmakers, Masons, and Labourers joined in one play (41), of the Purification of Mary and the Prophecies of Simeon and Anna. The Scriveners, the Tailors, and the Potters took successively (42, 43, 44), the Doubt of Thomas, the Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit. The Drapers represented (45), the Death of the Virgin Mary; the Weavers (46), the Appearance of the Virgin to Thomas; and the Ostlers (47), her Assumption and Coronation. The series then closed with the Day of Judgment, represented by the Mercers. Thus of the forty-eight plays, after the opening play of the Fall of Lucifer which begins in Heaven and ends in Hell, ten

plays are given to the Old Testament, eight to the incidents associated with the story of the Birth of Christ; three to the Baptism, the Temptation, and the Transfiguration; one to two significant incidents from the Gospel—that of the Woman taken in Adultery, which enforced the Christian Spirit of Mercy, and the Raising of Lazarus, as symbol of the Resurrection. Then follows at once the Entry into Jerusalem, after which ten plays are given to incidents associated with the story of the Death of Christ; with twelve more on the Entombment, the Descent into Hell, the Resurrection, and the chief incidents from the Resurrection to the Ascension. One play is added to show the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles; three are then added to complete the story of the Virgin Mary, before the closing of the series with the Day of Judgment.

The "Coventry Mysteries."

Of the "Coventry Mysteries" there is one MS.,* of which the greater part is shown, by a date on its hundredth leaf, to have been written in the year 1468. It wants the last leaf or leaves, and nothing in the MS. itself indicates that it belonged, as is assumed, to the Grey Friars of Coventry. Dr. Richard James, who died in 1639, librarian to Sir Robert Cotton, bought it for Cotton's library, and wrote on a flyleaf that the book was commonly called "Ludus Coventriæ, sive Ludus Corporis Christi." There is some reason for doubting Dr. James's record. That these were not the plays acted by the Coventry guilds is shown by the guild records, of which Mr. Sharp has given full details; and it is, at least, doubtful whether the Grey Friars would have kept a distinct set for their own acting. But Coventry was very famous for its Miracle Plays, and it is recorded that in 1456 Queen Margaret there saw "alle the pagentes played save Domesday, which might not be pleyde for lak

* In the British Museum, Cotton. Vespas. D viii.

of day. . . . And she was lodged at Richard Wodes the groc[r] . . . and there al the pleys were first pleid."* Richard III. went to see the Corpus Christi plays at Coventry in 1484. Henry VII. saw them on St. Peter's Day in 1486, and went again with his queen to see the plays of the Grey Friars in 1492.

The Coventry Plays

are forty-two in number. A Prologue sets them forth by way of proclamation to the inhabitants of any town in which that series of Mysteries might be chosen for representation, ending with the announcement—

"A Sunday next, yf that we may,
At vj of the belle we gynne our play,
In N. towne, wherefore we pray
That God may be youre spede. *Amen.*"

The first play is of the "Creation." In the beginning was God, here as in the other sequences of Mysteries. After God has declared Himself, and the angels have hymned (in Latin) the words from the *Te Deum*, "To Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein. To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,'" Lucifer claims and takes God's seat, and is cast down for his pride from heaven to hell. The world is then made, Adam and Eve are created, and their command is given them by the word of God, without attempt at dramatic dialogue. The "Fall of Man" is then narrated by dialogue that, like most of the conversation in this and the Chester series of Mysteries, does not disturb the regular structure of the stanzas. In the next Mystery, Cain and Abel take counsel from their father Adam, and Cain consents to go and sacrifice, with no worse remark than "I had lever gon home welle for to dyne." In sacrificing, he picks out the worst sheaf for God; but this is quietly represented, not by the vigorous showing of his avarice in deliberation, as in the "Wakefield Mysteries," and without the coarseness that, with rude dramatic force, puts into this part of the sketch of Cain in the Wakefield play the most repulsive line in all our early literature. Cain of the "Coventry Mystery" rather argues than insults. He urges that as God neither eats nor drinks, what is He the better if Cain gives Him the best sheaf. The offering of the worst

* Leet Book, quoted by Sharp.

having been then rejected, Cain's wrath is expressed in a few lines, Abel is killed, and the rest of the Scripture story is told gravely in dialogue between God and Cain, who expresses only his affliction at his doom.

The next story, that of "Noah's Flood," is also presented wholly without comic admixture. Noah's wife is pious and affectionate. After his family has been shut up in the ark, lapse of time is suggested by an interlude in which Lamech, the good archer, being blind, boasts to a youth of his old prowess, has his hand directed to what the youth takes for a beast under a bush, and kills Cain. Having thus incurred the curse upon the slayer of Cain, he beats to death with his bow the youth who had unwittingly misguided him.

The next subjects are "Abraham's Sacrifice;" "Moses and the Two Tables," in which Moses delivers in metrical paraphrase the Ten Commandments; and the Prophets, in which after Isaiah, David, and Jeremiah, more than two dozen other speakers give their testimony from Scripture to the coming of Christ. This is the last of the seven Mysteries from the Old Testament. The next Mystery, the "Barrenness of Anna," has a prologue spoken in the character of Contemplation. Then follow "Mary in the Temple," wholly devotional, with an epilogue by Contemplation. It includes the fifteen degrees from Babylon to the heavenly Jerusalem, and an anagram upon the sacred name of Maria. "Mary's Betrothment" is the next play. Here Joseph and the other kin of David come at the bishop's command with white rods into the temple, and the rod of Joseph flowers. Joseph being an old man who has been "mayden evyr and evyr more wele ben," there is for a few lines a faint touch of homely humour in his unwillingness to have a young wife forced upon him; but the writer's devotion to the Virgin forbids much of that. The marriage is celebrated, and pronounced by the bishop the holiest that ever was in this world, because it is resolved on both sides that Mary shall be true wife but clean maid. In the next Mystery, that of the "Salutation and Conception," the scene is first in heaven, where, Contemplation having opened the subject, the Heavenly Father is addressed by the Virtues, Truth, Pity, Justice, Peace. Each person of the Trinity is among the speakers, before Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace kiss each other, and the angel Gabriel is sent to open with *Ave Maria* his speech with the Virgin Mother. Presently the three persons of the Trinity, as beams of light, enter her bosom. Gabriel afterwards ends, as he began, with an *Ave*, and a choir of angels closes the Mystery, singing—

> "Ave Maria, gratia plena,
> Dominus tecum, Virgo serena."

In the next Mystery of the "Return of Joseph," Joseph's accusation of his wife is direct in form, but free from burlesque, before it passes into devotion after he has been spoken to by the angels. Then follows the visit to Elizabeth, in the course of which Mary repeats the *Magnificat* in Latin, and Elizabeth, as she does so, repeats it after her in English, sentence by sentence.

The next play, the "Trial of Joseph and Mary," is the first in the Coventry series that reflects a little of the life of its own time with native humour. A foremost character in it is the Sompnour or Summoner to the bishop's court. He opens by warning all who stand round about

> "That I somoun yow alle the rowte
> Loke ye fayl for no dowte
> At the Court to pere.
> Bothe John Jurrdon and Geffrey Gyle,
> Malkyn Mylkedode and fayr Maybyle,
> Stevyn Sturdy and Jak at the Style,
> And Sawdyr Sadelere."

Many more he cites by such names. Then the court filling, Raise-slander and Back-biter accuse Joseph and Mary. The bishop takes his seat between two Doctors of Law, and, hearing the detractors, sends Sym Somnere to summon the accused. They are summoned and come, are baited by the detractors, and doubted by the judges. Then they are submitted to the ordeal of drinking from "a bottle of God's vengeance" before walking seven times round the altar. Joseph is tried first. If he be guilty, spots will appear on his face. Joseph drinks and totters feebly and slowly round the altar, urged by the Summoner to

> "Lift up thi feet, sett forth thi ton,
> Or be my trewthe thou getyst a clowte."

Joseph clears himself. Then Mary, also reviled, drinks and goes triumphantly through the ordeal. One of the back-biters cries that the drink has been changed because Mary is of the bishop's kindred. He is required, therefore, to drink of it himself; does so willingly, and falls with a great pain in his head, of which sickness the Virgin heals him. The play ends with "Adoration of the Virgin," led by the bishop.

Next follows, still elaborating to the utmost, but without comic admixture, all that concerns the Virgin—the Birth of Christ. The

next is the Shepherds' play; but it begins with the singing of the angels, after which the shepherds simply recite prophecies and then go to seek Christ, whom they adore with religious singing and without bringing of gifts. Then comes the "Adoration of the Magi," wholly serious, but with a fine blustering Herod—jolly Absalon showing his lightness and maistrie—who opens the scene riding on horseback to his "high halls" on the scaffold, and ranting a fine roll of *r's*—

> "As a lord in ryalté in none regyon so ryche,
> And rulere of alle remys, I ryde in ryal aray.
> There is no lord of lond in lordchep to me lyche,
> Non lofflyere, non lofsemere—ever lestying is my lay,"

with more to the same effect. The Three Kings come, and presently, when Herod is mounted on his high scaffold, he begins with another roll of *r's*—

> "Now I regne lyk a kynge areyd ful ryche,
> Rollyd in ryngges and robys of array."

Of the child born in Bethlehem he speaks in this vein—

> "Boys now blaberyn bostynge of a baron bad
> In Bedlem is born be bestys, such bost is blowe;
> I xal prune that paddok and prevyn hym as a pad,
> Scheldys and sperys shalle I there sowe."

But after the "Adoration of the Magi" we have a pageant of the "Purification of the Virgin" before the "Slaughter of the Innocents." The "Slaughter of the Innocents" opens with Herod. When he has been told by his seneschal that the Three Kings have stolen away, he again opens his bluster with a roll of *r's*—

> "I ryde on my rowel ryche in my regne,
> Rybbys fful reed with rape xal I send,
> Popetyes and paphawkes I xal putten in peyne,
> With my spere prevyn, pychyn and to pende."

Besides the bombast of alliteration, Herod uses in these Mysteries a metre of short lines which are of the ancestry of Shakespeare's mock burlesque—

> "Thy mantle good,
> What! stained with blood?
> Approach, ye Furies fell!"

Says Herod—

" Knyghtys wise,
Chosyn ful chyse,
Aryse ! aryse !
And take your tolle !
And every page
Of ij yere age,
Or evyr ye swage,
Sleythe ilke a fool."

The massacre is represented with less rudeness than usual, as cause of lament to the mothers. Herod, informed that it is done, brags stoutly and calls for a rich feast. He sits gloriously at his feast. Death coming, tells the people that he shall cast down his pride. After the long speech of Death, Herod, who does not see the doom that is near, becomes loud in mirth and triumph. The two soldiers recite their success in massacre. Herod rejoices that the new-born king, his enemy, is dead no doubt, and calls on the minstrels to "blowe up a mery fytt." While the triumphant music plays, Death slays Herod and the two soldiers. Then the Devil takes them. Death bids all men beware of Herod's pride, and beware also of himself, for

" Of my comyng no man is ware,
Ffor whan men make most mery fare
Than sodenly I cast hem in care
And sle them evyn indede.
Thow I be nakyd and pore of array,
And wurmys knawe me all abowte,
Yit loke ye drede me nytte and day,
Ffor whan deth comyth ye stande in dowte ;
Even lyke to me, as I yow say,
Shalle alle ye be here in this rowte."

And he leaves them with a little further emphasis upon the worms by which they will be eaten—

" Amonges wormys, as I yow telle,
Undyr the erthe xal ye dwelle,
And thei xal etyn bothe flesche and felle
As thei have don me."

Christ Disputing in the Temple,* the Baptism of Christ, the Woman

* This play (the Weavers') was edited separately by Thomas Sharp for the Abbotsford Club in 1836.

taken in Adultery, and Lazarus, represent their story gravely and with close attention to the Scripture narrative. Four Consolers are used as speakers in the development of the story of Lazarus.

The next Mystery, the "Council of the Jews," opens with a long speech from Satan to his people. "To gete a thousand sowlys in an houre me thynkyth it but shorn." He tells of Christ's sufferings to come, and of His Disciples who shall forsake Him; calls on the people for their love, and promises them plenty. Let poverty take pride in a goodly pair of long-peaked shoes of fine Cordovan leather, hose of the costliest crimson cloth, with two dozen points of kid leather, the tags of fine silver. Have a shirt of fine Holland, but care not for the payment; a stomacher of clear Reynes cloth, the best that may be bought; Cadiz wool or flock to stuff the doublet with "and make thee of proporcyon: two smale legges and a gret body." Have a gown of three yards, a purse without money, a dagger for devotion; hair hanging down to the collar in sidelocks to harbour living beasts that tickle man of nights. Let a high small bonnet cover the crown. Let great oaths and lechery make thee delight; to maintain thine estate use bribery, and if the law reprove thee, say thou wilt fight. Let the beggar's daughter counterfeit a gentlewoman, and if she lack money get it of some man, setting up as a sign a collar splayed and furred with ermine, Calabrian cloth, or satin. The catalogue of fineries here given may have been adapted to the later date of the performance; it could not belong to a time earlier than the beginning of the sixteenth century. "I have brought you," continues the Devil, "new names for the pleasantness of sin. You shall call pride, honesty; lechery, nature; covetousness, wisdom; and wrath, manhood." After the Devil has thus preached his sermon, he departs; and John the Baptist, coming next, counsels the people to reform all wrong and be no more bold to do sin.

Then Annas appears, as a bishop of the old law, between two doctors in furred caps, with one standing before him as a Saracen, who is his messenger. He sends to Caiaphas and other judges, who are summoned and assemble in a formal Council, at which they adjudge Jesus to death, but resolve to wait nine days, during which they will send out spies and make inquiry. Now follows the "Entry into Jerusalem," the "Last Supper" (showing also Judas's selling of his Lord, with the demon's comment upon Judas), and the "Betrayal of Christ," in which the Virgin Mary, told of the taking of her son, ends the Mystery with her lament and prayer.

The next Mystery, that of "King Herod," opens with the speaking of two doctors as teachers of the people, to whom they explain a sacred

procession as it passes. When the procession has entered into the place, and Herod has taken his scaffold, an expositor in doctor's weeds (Contemplation) comes forward and explains, as the text stands in the extant MS., that with this (29th) Mystery it is proposed "toe procede the matere that we lefte the laste yere." The rest of the speaking is by Herod, who has the laws of Mahownd in governance, and is curious to see Christ; and by the soldiers who will search Galilee to take Him. Then, in continuance of that same pageant, follows the "Trial of Christ," opened by a messenger who comes into the place "rennyng and criying 'Tydynges! tydynges!' and so round abowth the place, 'Jhesus of Nazareth is take! Jhesus of Nazareth is take!'" and forthwith, hailing the princes, he tells how the Lord was taken. Then follows the bringing before Annas and Caiaphas, the buffeting and mocking (but the mocking slightly indicated), the denial by Peter and the crowings of the cock, the sending to Pilate (who appears upon a scaffold of his own), Pilate's answering that he will come, the hanging of himself by Judas, Christ before Pilate, the sending of Him to Herod, "and then Herowdes scafald xal unclose, shewyng Herowdes in astat, alle the Jews knelyng, except Annas and Caiaphas," &c. After this, Jesus is beaten "tyl He is alle bloody," and Herod bids them lead Him back to Pilate, giving Pilate power to condemn or save. Here Satan enters the place "in the most orryble wyse;" and while the procession is going from Herod's to Pilate's scaffold, a curtain is drawn, showing Pilate's wife in bed. Pilate's wife's dream is now shown as a very serious interlude, opened by a speech from Satan, and concluded by the demon who frightens Pilate's wife out of her bed and causes her to run to her husband and warn him just before the time when the procession has come back to him with Jesus.

Now follows the Mystery of the "Condemnation and the Crucifixion." After this the remaining pieces show the "Descent into Hell" by the soul of Christ, the "Burial of Christ," the "Resurrection," in which the soul of Christ rises from hell with Adam and Eve, Abraham, John the Baptist, and others. The soul re-animates its body, and immediately Christ proceeds to hail the Virgin, "*Salve, sancta parens*, my modyr dere," and there is, before the Scripture story proceeds, a dialogue between Christ and the Virgin, in which Christ says to her—

> "Alle this werlde that was forlorn
> Shal wurchepe you both evyn and morn."

The remaining plays are those of the "Three Maries," Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene," the "Pilgrims of Emmaus," the

"Ascension," the "Descent of the Holy Ghost," the "Assumption of the Virgin" (a play seven times as long as that of the "Ascension of Christ"), and "Doomsday." In the play of the "Assumption of the Virgin," Mary is crowned by the Trinity, Queen of Heaven and Mother of Mercy, and the archangel Michael declares that "God throw Mary is made mannys frend." The play of "Doomsday" is left to us unfinished through the loss of the last leaf or two of the MS.

Mr. Thomas Sharp, who examined the ancient books and documents belonging to the Corporation of Coventry while gathering materials for a history of his native city, found in the remaining account-books of the trading companies many particulars touching the management, machinery, dresses, and internal economy of the Coventry pageants or Mysteries. The name of pageant first applied to the vehicle on which the Mysteries were acted, and was afterwards transferred to the performances themselves. The local MS., which records that Henry VII. went to Coventry in 1492 "to see the plays acted by the Grey Friars," is, says Mr. Sharp, not older than the reign of Charles I. Sir William Dugdale, in his "History of Warwickshire," printed in 1656, speaks of the Coventry plays as "being acted with mighty state and reverence by the friars of this house, who had theatres for the several scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city," and he referred to the Cotton MS. for authority as to the nature of their plays. The series known as the "Coventry Mysteries" may possibly have belonged to the Coventry Grey Friars, and the Grey Friars may have acted in the streets one set of Mysteries, the Guilds another, though the practical difficulties in the way of believing that they did so are considerable. Certain it is that the plays now called "Coventry Mysteries" are not those which were acted by the Guilds of Coventry.

Although the Drapers' Company is known, by chance mention of it in description of a tenement, to have had a

pageant house in 1392, these guild-plays, according to MS. annals quoted by Mr. Sharp, were invented in the year 1416, the year of the establishment of Hox Tuesday, said to be a commemoration of the overthrow of the Danes, near Coventry, on St. Brice's Day, A.D. 1002, when there was played the "Overthrow of the Danes, or History of King Edward the Confessor." *

Among the Digby MSS. in the Bodleian Library are three Miracle Plays on the "Conversion of St. Paul," opened and closed by Poeta. St. Paul enters on horseback, is converted, and takes the dress of a Disciple. Two devils discuss his conversion with dismay, and resolve to stir up the Jewish bishops, lest the devil's law "be clean downe laid." The handwriting of this MS. is said to be at least as old as the reign of Henry VII. Another play in the same volume shows the castle of Mary Magdalene besieged by the Devil and the Seven Deadly Sins, includes the raising of Lazarus, and has among its characters Tiberius Cæsar and Herod. A later play on the "Slaughter of the Innocents," and another piece, an imperfect copy of a Moral Play of "Mind, Will, and Understanding," are in the same volume.† Other Miracle Plays.

In 1836 John Payne Collier privately printed twenty-five copies of each of five Miracle Plays; one, on the "Harrowing of Hell," in southern dialect, was from a MS.‡ as old as the reign of Edward III.; the next was the "Sacrifice of Abraham," from a MS. of the reign of Henry VI., discovered by Mr. D. Laing, of Edinburgh, in Trinity College,

* An order of Common Council, in 1591, refers the play on "Hox Tuesday" to the death of Hardicanute. There were no spoken words when this play was acted in 1574 before Queen Elizabeth; it was then an antique military spectacle.

† Collier's "History of Dramatic Poetry," ed. 1831, vol. ii., pp. 230—235, or ed. 1879, vol. ii., pp. 152—157.

‡ From MS. Harleian, 2,253.

Dublin;* the third was the second Shepherd Play from the Towneley Series, then unprinted; the fourth was the Chester Play of "Antichrist," then also unprinted; the fifth was the "Marriage of the Virgin." Mr. Collier also edited for the "Miscellany" of the Camden Society the York Play on the "Incredulity of Thomas"—the only play of that series found in a separate MS.—which may, he thinks, rival in antiquity the "Harrowing of Hell," written in Edward III.'s time, though the MS. in which it occurs may not be earlier than of the reign of Henry VI.† It is now in the keeping of the York Philosophical Society.

There were also at York plays on the Lord's Prayer and on the Creed. The play of the Paternoster was referred to by Wyclif as "the Paternoster in English tongue as men seyen in the Play of York." It set forth in several books the praise of virtue and the scorn of vice. There was a Guild of the Lord's Prayer—*Oracionis Domini*—which numbered a hundred members in the year 1399. The books of its play were lost when they were lent to Archbishop Grindal. He borrowed them in 1572, and when their return was asked for in 1575 they could not be found. The play on the Creed, which is also lost, was acted at York every tenth year by the Guild of Corpus Christi. The texts of the play of Noah's Ark from the Newcastle-on-Tyne series and of the play of Abraham and Isaac from Suffolk or Norfolk have each been twice printed.

When about to set up a play, each guild chose for itself a competent manager, to whom it gave the rule of the

* Class D., Tab. 4, No. 18.

† It is in vol. iv. of the "Camden Miscellany," published by the Camden Society in 1859. The play was discovered many years ago among the archives at the Guildhall, York, and published by Mr. J. Croft in 1797 in his "Excerpta Antiqua," with many errors in the reading of the MS. It was lent to the Camden Society by Dr. John Sykes, of Doncaster.

pageant, and voted a fixed sum for its expenses. The play-book and the standing wardrobe and other properties were handed over to him, and he was accountable, of course, for their return after the close of the performances. The manager had to appoint his actors, to give them their several parts written out for them (perhaps by the prompter, who was a regular official), and to see to the rehearsals, of which there would be two for an old play and at least five for a new one.

Stage management.

At rehearsal time, as well as during the great performance, the actors ate and drank at cost of the guild, ending all with a supper, at which they had roast beef and roast goose, with wine for the chiefs, and beer for the rest. The actors were paid, of course, according to the length of their parts and quantity of business in them, not their dignity. Thus in a play setting forth the Trial and Crucifixion of our Lord, the actors of Herod and Caiaphas received each 3s. 4d.; the representative of Annas, 2s. 2d.; and of Christ, 2s.; which was also the sum paid to each actor in the parts of His executioners, and 6d. more than was paid for acting the Devil or Judas. In the united plays of the "Descent into Hell" and the "Ascension," the payment was to the actor who represented Christ, 1s. 6d.; and 1s. 4d. to him who played the Devil. In one play we find this gradation of the scale of payment to performers:—"Paid, for playing of Peter, xvi$^{d.}$; to two damsels, xii$^{d.}$; to the demon, vi$^{d.}$; to Fawston for hanging Judas, iv$^{d.}$; paid to Fawston for cock-crowing, iv$^{d.}$"

Actors.

Of the costume of the actors, and of the stage furniture, a tolerably clear notion is also to be drawn from the Coventry account-books, of which Mr. Sharp printed all that bears upon such questions. They record, of course, chiefly repairs and renewals of stage properties and wardrobe. In one year Pilate has a new green cloak, in another a new hat. Pilate's wife was Dame

Properties.

Procula, and we have such entries as, "For mending of Dame Procula's garments, vii$^{d.}$" "To reward to Mrs. Grimsby for lending of her gear for Pilate's wife, xii$^{d.}$" "For a quart of wine for hiring Procula's gown, ii$^{d.}$" No actor had naked hands. Those not in masks had their faces prepared by a painter. The costume of each part was traditional, varied little in the course of years, and much of it was originally designed after the pictures and painted sculpture in the churches. As in those mediæval decorations, gilding was used freely; the performer of Christ wore a gilt peruke and beard, so did Peter, and probably all the Apostles or saints who would be represented on church walls with a gilt nimbus. Christ's coat was of white sheepskin, painted and gilded, with a girdle and red sandals. The parts of the High Priests Caiaphas and Annas were often played in ecclesiastical robes hired from a church, a practice condemned by the author of the "Manuel des Péchiez." Herod, who wore a mask, was set up as a sceptred royal warrior in a gilt and silvered helmet, in armour and gown of blue satin, with such Saracen details of dress as the Crusaders connected with the worship of Mahomet, including the crooked faulchion, which was gilt. Pilate used in the Coventry guild-play of the "Ascension" (which is not extant) a club with a broad head of leather stuffed with wool, and among articles furnished for him were also sixteen leather balls, of which the use is unknown.* The tormentors of Christ wore jackets of black buckram with nails and dice upon them. The Virgin Mary was crowned, as in her

* Professor Ebert (*Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur*, vol. i., p. 63) says it is "remarkable that no Englishman has made the observation," but cannot help thinking of the "schon tief im Mittelalter in England so beliebte cricket spiel," and suggests that Pilate, perhaps with help of his four knights, played a game of cricket as introduction or interlude. Cricket played with sixteen balls and a pantomime club stuffed with wool!

images. The angels wore white surplices and wings. The devil also had wings, and was played in an appropriate mask and leather dress trimmed with feathers and hair. He was, as the Prologue to the Chester Plays describes him, "the devil in his feathers all ragged and rent," or, as the Coventry account-books show, carried three pounds of hair upon his hose. His close-fitting leather dress ended in representations of claws for the hands and feet. All the other actors wore gloves, or had sleeves continued into hands. The souls of the saved at the Day of Judgment wore white leather; the others, whose faces were blacked, a linen dress suggestive of fire, with black, yellow, and red, like the sinner's dress worn afterwards by heretics condemned at the *autos-da-fé*.

In the mounting of the scene, the floor of the stage was bestrewn with rushes, and the body of the scaffolding was concealed under a decorated cloth. At Coventry there was a canopy, with vanes and streamers, and a standard of red buckram. For some of the plays, besides the main stage, several scaffolds were required, as in the trial of Christ a scaffold for Pilate, to whom a messenger is sent, and who comes to sit in judgment; and another scaffold for Pilate's wife, from before whose scaffold curtains are drawn when the devil goes to affright her with a dream, and she, rising from bed, comes to Pilate, while the procession is marching round the open place where the pageant is acted. The space between such scaffolds was kept clear for the actors. When Herod entered on horseback, he came through the lane left for him in the street or square, and dismounted to ascend to his throne on the scaffold. Through the street, too, rode the Three Kings, who remained perhaps on horseback while speaking with Herod, and only dismounted to ascend the scaffold on which the infant Christ was represented. In the Play of the Shepherds there must always have been two scaffolds, either side by side, with a partition

between, or at a little distance from each other—in one of which the farce was acted, in the other the scene of the stable and the new-born Christ was devoutly realised. In the second Shepherds' Play of the Wakefield or Woodkirk series, there must have been, besides the stage for the Christ child, a broad scaffold or two scaffolds side by side, representing on one side open country, separated by a wall with a door in it from the side representing the interior of Mak's cottage, with bed, cradle, and other accessories. The stage furniture was as handsome in thrones and other properties as each Company could make it. They gilded what they could; for instance, the pillar to which Christ was bound. Hell-mouth, a monstrous head of painted linen with open jaws—sometimes jaws that opened and shut, two men working them—terrible teeth, and a fire lighted where it would give the appearance of a breath of flames, was always carefully presented. By this way the fiends came up and down. In a MS. note to a Mystery of "The Passion" in the Royal Library of Paris* it is recorded that at the representing of such a play on the plain of Veximiel, when the chaplain of Metrange played Judas (and was nearly dead while hanging, for he fainted, wherefore he was very quickly unhung and carried off), the Mouth of Hell was very well done; for it opened and shut when the devils required to enter and come out, and had two large eyes of steel. Only in the play of the Descent into Hell, and not then always, does there seem to have been any desire in the English contrivers of these pageants to bring hell itself upon the stage.

Miscellaneous items of charge in the Coventry accounts include some for the mending of Hell-mouth, for its curtain, or for keeping up the fire at it. There is a charge for souls' coats, one for a link to set the world on fire, and "paid to Crowe for making of three worlds, iii$^{s.}$"

* Cited by Hone, "Ancient Mysteries" (London, 1823), pp. 172–3.

CHAPTER V.

"CURSOR MUNDI"—NORTHERN HOMILIES AND SOUTHERN LEGENDS—"THE PEARL."

MYSTERY PLAYS had their teaching shared by at least one poem, that ran through the Course of the World from Creation to Doomsday, and sought to put into narrative form, for lively recitation to the people, the whole story of the relation between God and Man. It was called "Cursor Mundi," and was a poem of the north of England, containing about twenty-four thousand lines. The lines were eight syllabled and rhymed in couplets. In the north of England that was the measure most frequently used. The interlacements of rhyme into strophes, and the various measures learnt in the south of England from French poets read at court, found their way, of course, more slowly to the north. In the "Cursor Mundi" couplets of rhyme change into strophes in the telling of the Death of Christ. "Cursor Mundi."

It is always to be borne in mind that when readers were few, listeners were many. The most fashionable poems written for the recreation of the wealthy were read aloud in company; and poems, like the "Cursor Mundi," written for the pleasure and instruction of the people, were sung at festivals,

> On ember-eves, and holy-ales,

by men who made such work their calling,* by priests,

* "E. W." II. 13, 15; III. 149, 375.

monks, or friars who used what skill they had in the same way for the delight and teaching of the people, or by any of the people who had learnt to repeat some of the welcome tales. "Cursor Mundi," written about 1320, comes in a straight line from Cædmon's Paraphrase,* with changes of character depending on its later place in time.

By course of time the Bible story had come to be more obscured by an embroidery of fancy work, intended to adorn it and enforce its claims on the attention of the people. The narrative form would admit many details for which there could be no place in a series of incidents to be set forth by actors on a stage. But the "Cursor Mundi," like "Genesis" and "Exodus" and other preceding poems of its class, is often as dramatic as a monologue can be. It is in no way dull. There is evidence also that it was used in its own day as the poem that most thoroughly supplied a living want. Not only does the number of extant MS. copies indicate that it was freely used, but variation of dialect shows that the use of it extended from the north country, in which it was produced, to the midland, by which it was afterwards adopted. There are two MSS. in the British Museum; there is one in the Bodleian Library at Oxford; one in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge; one in the University Library at Göttingen; and there are at least four more in different places. The whole poem has been printed by Dr. Richard Morris in five volumes of the Early English Text Society, which give in parallel columns the text of four MSS., two of them—the Cotton MS. Vespasian A iii. in the British Museum Library, and the MS. Theol. 107 in the Göttingen University Library—being in northern English; and the dialect of the other two—Fairfax MS. 14 in the Bodleian, and MS. R. 3, 8 in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge—being midland, although one of these repeats many northern forms. Dr. Morris's

* "E. W." II. 75, 79.

Introduction to the "Cursor Mundi" has not yet been published; his first care was to print the whole important poem, in a four-text edition, which includes several pieces found appended to it in the manuscripts. These pieces are Expositions of the Apostles' Creed and of the Lord's Prayer; a Prayer to the Trinity; a Prayer for the Hours of the Passion; a Song of the Five Joys of our Lady; and a Book of Penance.

Cursor Mundi.

At the head of the Bodleian MS. is written—

"Þis is þe best boke of alle
þe cours of þe werlde men dos hit calle."

Men covet to hear—the word is "hear," not "read"—rhymes and romances of Alexander and Cæsar, of the Siege of Troy, of Brut and King Arthur, of Charlemagne and Roland, of Tristram and Isoude, to read and hear songs in various rhyme, English, French, and Latin [then the three languages of English literature]. Of the things that they like best

"The wise man will of wisdom hear,
The fool him draws to folly near;"

a tale of right the wrongful loathe, and pride with buxomness is wroth. The nature of all fruit comes from the root, a good pear tree yields good pears. Our good or ill deeds, mine and thine, have root in our hearts. Our idle loves that soft began have ending smart; the love that helps is fixed upon the Virgin Mary. Here the poet dwells upon her who was to the common people an embodiment of the Divine love and tenderness, to whom they turned for the mercy that in mediæval teaching hardly seemed to be an attribute of God himself. In worship of her the poet writes, he says, "a song that shall avail and last;" before he ceases (blins), he says—

"I sal yow schew wit myn entent
Brefli of aiþere testament;
Al this Werld, or þis bok blin
Wit Cristés help I sal over-rin,
And tell sum gestés principale
For all mag na man have in tale.

But for-þi þat na werc may stand
Wit-out grund-wall to be lastand,
þar-for þis werc sal I found
On a selcuth stedfast ground,
þat es, þe haly trinité
þat all has wroght wit his beuté;
At him-self first I sette mi merc,
And sithen to tell his hand werc."

Then follows a short summary of the Bible story to be told, with the added comment that man needs to know how he began, how he spread in the world, and first and last "in whatkin cours þis werld is past." This same book is translated into English for the love of the English people, for the common folk to understand. Commonly I read, says the poet, French rhymes; nearly all is written for Frenchmen; what is there for him who knows no French? The commons of England are English, the speech that most can understand should most be used. The English tongue is little praised in France. Let each have his language. I speak to the unlearned and the English who understand what I tell; and most to those who waste their lives, to teach them to be ware and wise. Jesus Christ such grace me send, that I may their life amend.

" þarfore draw you hidder-wart
That of þe pardoun wil have part,
And quo-so herés þis pardoun
He sal have Cristés benisoun.

Now of þis proloug wil we blin,
In Cristés name our boke begin:
Cursur o werld man aght it call
For almost it over-rennés all.
Tak we our biginning þan
Of him þat al þis werld began."

The Creation of the World is then associated with the Trinity, of which the sun is an emblem, three in one, round, hot, and light. The circle of the body signifies the Father; light, the Son; and heat, the Holy Ghost. The first creation in three days,—of the Angel Race, the World, and Time,—is quoted from Saint Augustine; then follows the Creation of the Earth and man. There were thrice three orders of Angels, among whom Lucifer was first. Then Lucifer rebelled.

"Sette he sayde my sete I salle
Agayne him þat ys lorde of alle;
In the norþ side I sette my sete
Servise of me sal he not gett.
Qui suld I him servise yeild?
Al sal be at myn awen weild."

Then Michael fought with him and cast him down to Hell; and Bede is quoted as authority for the distance of Hell from the throne of bliss. At forty miles a day it is a travel of seven thousand seven hundred years. Then follow mysteries of the fashioning of man from the four elements,—earth for his body, water for his blood, air for his breath, fire for his heat; and of the seven holes in his head,—two for the ears, two for the eyes, two for the nose, and one for the mouth, which answer to the number of the seven master stars; with other ingenious analogies between man and the world that he inhabits. In the soul of man is a trinity of powers—perception (which is of three things, past, present, and future), understanding, and wisdom. Adam was made of body and soul outside Paradise, and he had a name given to him of four letters, signifying the four quarters of the world—east, west, north, south—to denote dominion. He was placed in Paradise, where he named the beasts, and received his own mate, whom he named Virago:—

"Quen sco was broght befor Adam
Virago gaf he hir to nam;
þar for hight sco virago,
ffor makéd o þe man was sco."

The poet tells of joys of Paradise when the sun was seven times brighter than it is now, and the moon was as bright as our sun, and goes on to the story of the temptation of Eve, the loss of Paradise, the coming-in of strife, until Christ with His grace bring peace. When Adam asks how he shall reconcile himself—

"I wot but þe haf I no freind:
Tell me ar I fra þe weind
Howgat and wit quatkin thing
May I gete þi saghteling.*
He said, 'Adam, now wel sais þou
I sal þe tel and herken now;

* Reconciliation.

Amonge þine oþer wérkes hende
Of þi wynnyng gyve me þe tende,
Of al þi fruyt holde parties nyne
And I wol þat þe tenþe be myne.'
'Lord,' he seyde, 'þou gevest al
Whi shulde þi part be so smal?
þe halvendel or part þe þridde
We wol þe gyve if þou bidde.'"

Here is, of course, the Churchman fixing well on the people's mind a faith in the Divine origin of tithes, with shrewd suggestion of the smallness of the claim. Adam was created at undern-time—about nine in the morning—Eve was made out of his side at midday; they broke the command at once, and were expelled from Paradise at noon; noon having here its original meaning of the ninth hour, which slipped afterwards back to midday with a change of hour in the noon-tide meal. Adam therefore was six hours in Paradise, and Eve but three hours. The story is carried on with like additions of detail through the strife of Cain with Abel to the death of Adam, which is associated with a legend of Seth. Seth was sent along the track of Adam and Eve from Paradise—shown by the greater greenness of the grass—to tell the angel at the gate that Adam was tired of life and to ask when he should die. The angel at the gate bade Seth look into the garden, putting in no more than his head. There he saw a vision of the child Christ on the top of a tree whose root reached down to Hell. Under the root Seth saw his brother Abel sorrowing. The angel at the gate explained the vision, said that Adam should die in three days, and gave to Seth three pips from an apple of the fatal tree. They were to be placed at the root of Adam's tongue, whence they should grow and produce cedar, cypress, and pine for medicine to man. The cedar—tree without equal—represents the Father; cypress, with its sweet savour, represents the Son; pine, rich in number of its fruits, figures the Holy Ghost. Adam died after three days; the pips grew an ell high, and so remained, without waxing or waning till the time of Moses. All men who died, however holy, until the time of Christ, went to Hell; and from Adam to Christ's harrowing of Hell was four thousand three hundred and four years. In the following narrative it is said of Enoch that—

"He was þe first þat lettris fand,
And wrat sum bokis wid his hand."

Then follows tradition of the prophecy of the battle between Enoch and Antichrist, Enoch with Elias for helper.*

* "E. W." II. 97.

" To Paradis quik was he tan
And þar he lives in fless and ban ;
He sal cum befor domisday
To fight for þe Christen lay,*
Wid Antecrist þan sal he fight,
For to weret þe Christen right.
He and his felaw Heliá,
Antecrist sal þaim both sla ;
Bot wit þair upris fra ded to lijf
þan sal þai fel þat fals strijf."

The story of the foundation of human arts, in which Noema, daughter of Lamech, is said to have been the first weaver, then goes on with the corruption of men until the Flood. While telling the story of the Flood the poet cites one of his authorities, Petrus Comestor, whose "Historia Scholastica" has evidently been one of the books used in the writing of the "Cursor Mundi," and who is named in line 1,921.

" Als piers mayner, þe god clerk,
Telles of þis in sumkin werk."

But Piers Mayner (mangeur, comestor), the right reading in the Cotton MS., has been misread into "Piers Maior" by the old copyists of the Fairfax, Göttingen, and Trinity MSS. The story of the Flood is told at length ; then follow the sign of the rainbow, the commands of God, and the repeopling of the Earth, with details of the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japhet. The story of Nimrod King of Babylon is then dwelt upon, and the breaking of one speech into sixty-two sorts at the building of the Tower of Babel. Shem was not at the building, for which reason his speech remained Hebrew. Idolatry began with Nimrod, when men made images in metal of dead kindred or dead friends. The Second Age of the World had begun with Noah ; the Third Age began with Abraham and extended to the reign of David, with which began the Fourth Age, whereof David and Solomon were the Founders. The Fifth Age was that of the Birth, Childhood, and Youth of Jesus. The Sixth Age of the World began with His Baptism and Temptation in the Wilderness. The Seventh Age will begin with the coming of Antichrist, and its end will be the end of the world at Doomsday.

Through all these Ages of the World the "Cursor Mundi" runs its course. In the Third Age it is first noted that the Virgin Mary and

* Faith. † Defend.

Christ came of Abraham, and the poet prays that he may so tell their story as to bring her honour and us gain, "hir to mensk and us to mede." The tales of the three Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Joseph and his brethren, are told at length in 3,180 lines. Then follows the story of Moses. The burning bush that yet remained green and unburned, from which God called to Moses, is described as—

> "A foreshewing scene
> Of modir boþe and mayden clene
> þat siþen lang, withouten less
> Bar a child and scho wemless *
> Als did þe tre þat semed to bren
> And yet was þer na fire þer-in."

The Passage of the Red Sea is told with vivacity; and when in the passage through the wilderness the people are impatient of thirst, we come again to the three trees—cedar, cypress, and pine, that had remained an ell high since their seeds, taken in Paradise from apples of the forbidden tree, were sown under the tongue of Adam. Moses slept in a wood and saw at his head a cypress wand, at his left hand a cedar wand, at his right hand a pine tree wand, and knew them by their leaves. Three times he saw them, and then knew in them the mystery of the Trinity. Those wands he bare always with him, they were always in leaf and flower, their touch turned bitter waters into sweet. He had them when he climbed Mount Sinai, he buried them under earth while he fasted in Lent; nothing changed them—

> "But ever they held leaf and flour
> Savouring with a sweet savoúr."

The tale of Moses includes a setting forth of the Mosaic Law, and passes to the story of the entering into the Land of Promise. The Fables of Saturnus and Sir Jupiter are said to have been written in the time of Caleb, Joshua's successor; in the time of Samgath or Shamgar, Judge of Israel, Troy was begun. Orpheus and Hercules were in the time of Gideon. In Sir Jair's time Priam reigned in Troy; and the land of women without men, the Amazons, began in the time of Gideon. The Siege of Troy is associated with later Judges. Then follows, at some length, the tale of Samson—at such length, one might say, as would make it a tale equal in substance to a Miracle

Play; the sequence of the tales throughout the "Cursor Mundi" having obviously the same purpose as the sequence of the Miracle Plays—to delight and teach. Through Eli the poet passes to the tale of Samuel, which leads to the tale of Saul and David. The Third Age ends with the death of Saul when the world was 4,084 years old. Then follows a genealogy of thirteen generations from Abraham to Jesse; and the Fourth Age of the world begins with the story of the reign of David.

When David had reigned twelve years with much strife, he was bidden in a dream to cross the Jordan and go to the burial place of Moses. In that tomb he would find the three wands of cedar, cypress, and pine that Moses bare with him.

> "Es na man for soth can sai
> Of hu gret vertu and grace ar þai;
> Ne na man tung can sai, na mele,*
> Quat þai sal bere o saulis hele."

The three wands were found, all of one height, all different, yet growing on one stock; David knelt to them with reverence, drew them gently from the ground, and when David and his company turned on their way to see a rich man who was sick, the sight of those wands gave him health. They met four rich Saracens, black men with their mouths in their breasts, their eyebrows over their ears, their eyes in their foreheads; they had black hairy arms with their elbows set in their sides, and they were crumple-kneed hunchbacks. They asked to see the wands, kissed them, and were at once made white and shapely. A sick hermit was miraculously healed. The waters of Jordan parted to make way for David as he returned with the three wands. David placed them in a cistern, where they took firm root, so that they could not be pulled out. Then David made round about them a garden and built a wall. The triune tree grew wondrously for thirty years, and often David knelt thereunder when he prayed, and he learned many wise things under its shadow. The Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, contain the wisdom learnt under that tree.

> "þe quilest he satte under þat bogh
> Of alle wisdome he had inogh."

The interweaving of this fable, as type of the Trinity, with the course of the whole poem, helps to connect its parts and associate the poet's

* Speak.

conception of growth of the true knowledge of God with advance towards the birth of Christ. The story of the Judgment of Solomon is told at length; Solomon gives his judgment under the tree. There he was seated "where he most the witté sought of all the thingés that he wrought." When Solomon built the Temple the holy tree was put into it, with thirty silver circles by which David had measured its annual growth. These were the thirty silver pieces given to Judas for betrayal of our Lord. The tree itself Solomon had tried in vain to use as a masterbeam for his Temple. It was hallowed in it, and could not be moved. When a priest named Cyril tried to cut it, it flashed flame. A woman named Maximilla came to worship it; she chanced to sit on it, her clothes took fire, and she prophesied that the Lord of Healing, Jesus Christ, born of a maiden, Saviour of the lost, should die on a cross made by the Jews of that tree. The Jews beheaded her for blasphemy. An angel took her soul to Heaven, where she was named Christian. The Jews cast the tree into a pool, and the water of that pool healed the sick. It was laid over a brook that the feet of sinful men might trample out its holiness. The Sibyl came to Solomon and had to pass that brook, but she knelt in worship of that wood, and then—

> "Sco lift her skirt wit-uten scurn
> And bar-fote wodé sco þat burn."

The tree, at the time of Christ's Passion, lay again in the Temple. After the death of Solomon a brief record of the kings and prophets is made to lead to the Fifth Age of the World, the Birth of Christ.

Here the poet begins with the kindred of the Virgin and the foreshowings of Christ, by Isaiah and Jeremiah, by Joel and Elijah. The Jews paid no heed, but God Himself gave to the Virgin praise and love.

Now follows a retrospect to connect all the preceding story with God's love to man in the redemption of the world by His Son Jesus Christ; and this is enforced with a Parable, from Grosteste's "Château d'Amour," of a King who had four daughters—Mercy, Truth, Justice, and Peace. Mercy pleaded for a condemned servant who had been beguiled by the enemy. Truth urged that Mercy should be guided by her, or misdeed never would be punished. Justice said that the condemned servant deserved his doom. But Peace had left the land. Ought not Truth and Justice to keep in the land their sister Peace, who would bring them to accord with Mercy? The King's Son, moved by Mercy, will make Justice agree with Mercy:—

> "Fader, I sal on me forþi
> O thral tak clething sothfastli,

And thol on me þe dom I sal,
þat he suld vnder-ga, yon thral.
I sal cri pes in land, i-wis,
And Dom and Pes do samen kiss."

Until Christ, none could ransom Adam and cause Justice and Peace to kiss each other. The homiletic retrospect then passes to the Virgin Mary, and represents her, following in part Grosteste's "Château d'Amour," * in detailed allegory as a Castle of Love. Dr. Haenisch has proved that the quotations are from the original poem in French, and not from the old translation of it into Midland English. The "Cursor Mundi" quotes also Robert Grosteste as an authority in line 9,516, where he says he is taking an example (which is from the "Château d'Amour") "ute of *sent Robert* bok." This leads to a prayer to our Lady that precedes the story of her birth from Joachim and Anna, who kept only a third of their goods to themselves, and of the rest gave one-third to the poor and the other third to the priests. Next follows the legend of the Virgin's birth. An authority here, which has been traced through many parallel passages by Dr. Haenisch, was Wace's poem in French on the Establishment of the Festival of the Conception of our Lady.† For twenty years after their marriage Joachim and Anna were childless; then came the promise of the virgin maid who should bear healing to the world, and Joachim sacrificed ten white lambs to God, twelve bulls to the poor, and a hundred sheep to the town. The ten white lambs betokened Christ taken and crucified for us; the twelve bulls represented twelve Apostles; and the hundred sheep the congregation of the faithful, a hundred standing for all fulness. The child was named Mary. When taken to the Temple at three years old she climbed the highest steps without help of any. As she grew, God led her in all her ways; she had communion with angels, she served God night and day in the Temple. When the maidens who had reached the age of fourteen were sent by the Bishop back to their friends to be married, Mary abided by her vow to God and refused to go. A voice from Heaven bade the perplexed priests look to Isaiah's prophecy of the rod out of Jesse. They called on all the kin of David to come with rods, and if the rod of any one of them should blossom, he was to marry Mary. Joseph came unwillingly, but his rod blossomed and a dove descended on it, and then, whether he would or no, Joseph was espoused to Mary. Reasons are given for the espousal of the maiden-mother, and the

* "E. W." III. 315. † "E. W." III. 56.

story, begun with the use of the apocryphal "Evangelium de Nativitate Mariæ," is continued through the childhood of Jesus with much very legendary matter of the kind found in an English poem which is in the Laud MS. "Le Enfaunce Jesu Christ." Legends of such a childhood should express the fabler's tenderest sense of the beauty of young life with all its energy of love displayed and not a spot upon its innocence. But the inventions here are for the most part low in conception and unsuited to the theme. They are the inventions of a celibate who thought child-nature unmannerly and petulant. Use is made also in the New Testament part of the "Cursor Mundi" of the apocryphal Gospels of Matthew and Nicodemus.

The Sixth Age of the World begins when we come near to the thirteen thousandth line of the poem. It opens with the Baptism and Temptation of Christ, the beginning of His Ministry, the choosing of the Apostles, the Miracle at Cana in Galilee; and the bridegroom at Cana is said to have followed Christ and become afterwards the Evangelist St. John. The Gospel history from the first miracle at Cana to the beginning of the plotting of the Jews against the life of Christ is told in about fifteen hundred lines. The chief incidents selected are the miracle of the loaves and fishes; the healing upon the Sabbath day of one born blind, and the anger thereat of the Pharisees; the judgment on the woman taken in adultery, with enforcement of charity and the forgiveness of sins; the healing of the sick man in the well after an angel had stirred the waters, with renewed accusations by the Jews against Christ for working on the Sabbath day; Christ's preaching in the Temple; Mary Magdalen's box of ointment, again developing the lesson of forgiveness of sins; Christ with Martha and with Mary who had chosen the better part; and the tale of the raising of Lazarus fully dwelt upon, and followed by homily upon the love of Christ, with a short retrospect upon the relation of the Jews to Him whom they desire to slay. Henceforth they seek to slay Jesus, whose time is not yet come. He goes to Jerusalem and preaches there, declaring that He is the Son of God, and that He will keep His Father's sheep. He casts the money changers from the Temple. The poet becomes homilist again before he tells of Christ's entry into Jerusalem beset by the rejoicings of the poor, with whom the children sing "Gloria Laus" to the Healer of the griefs of men. The princes and the rich withdraw.

In this part of the "Cursor Mundi" we are made to feel strongly what is shown in many a touch throughout, that the aim of the whole poem is to bring home religion to the poor. The poor, downtrodden by the tyrannies of strong men upon earth, were terrified with images

of an angry God who had in the other world a torture chamber furnished with all cruelties that could be devised by the imaginations of men seeking through terror to drive many from sin; they looked, therefore, with longing hope to the embodiment of love and mercy in the mother of the Lord, who would intercede for them with womanly tenderness; and it is in accordance with this feeling that the "Cursor Mundi," addressed to the main body of the people, finds the first note of its music in this worship of the Virgin, and dedicates itself to her. Poverty of invention in some incidents of the childhood of Christ, the poem took from the source whence those legends were drawn; but the Christ drawn from the Gospels is represented by the poet of the "Cursor Mundi" as the Healer who gave Himself entirely to the love of man. Those incidents are chosen for full treatment that most express His human sympathies, His tender consideration of the frailties of man, His fellowship with any who repent of their misdoing and will go and sin no more. The good priest who wrote the "Cursor Mundi," while he took care to interweave in his work the main doctrines and ordinances of the Church, was above all things seeking to bring home to the hearts of the people at large the purest consolations of religion. His image of Christianity was one designed to draw the pure and simple to the love of Christ.

The poem passes from the Last Supper to the betrayal by Judas, the words of comfort spoken by Christ to His disciples, the agony in the garden, the taking of the Lord to the house of Caiaphas, the denial by Peter. Legend of Judas is interwoven. Judas told his mother of the betrayal of Christ. She said that Jesus, if slain by the Jews, would rise again. Judas replied—

"'He shal never rise ageyn
Truly bi no myght:
Furst shal þis cok vp rise
Was scalded yustir night.
Vnneþe had he seide þat word,
þe cok toke vp his flight,
Feþered feirer þen biforn,
Even bi grace on hight.
þehne bigon þe traitour fals
To drede for his plight.

þis it was þe samé cok
þat Peter herdé crowe
Whenne he had forsake his Lord
þriés on a rowe."

The first eight lines of this passage form, it will be observed, a stanza; the next four lines are half of another stanza, like in structure. This change of measure is associated only with that part of the work which tells the story of the Passion. The narrative, continued to the death, burial, and resurrection, again marks very distinctly the relation between the "Cursor Mundi" and the Miracle Plays. Then the poem goes on to the legend of Joseph of Arimathea, follows the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, and takes from it the story of the Harrowing of Hell. After the Ascension there is told the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the "Cursor Mundi" then sets forth the most impressive incidents in the Acts of the Apostles, including the story of Ananias and Sapphira; the witnessing of the Apostles to Jesus; the growth of the number of the sheep within the Christian fold until the shepherds could no longer count their tale; the stoning of Stephen; the desire of Simon Magus to buy the gifts of the Holy Ghost; the conversion of Paul; the preaching of Peter and the vision by which he was taught that God is no respecter of persons, for in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him. After Peter's going forth to preach among the pagans, the poet says that he will cease to speak of the Apostles, who sped in their teaching and though they suffered much were never silenced by the anger of man.

The "Cursor Mundi" passes on to the Assumption of the Virgin, who lived to the age of sixty-three, and the Church legend of the Virgin is then given in eight hundred and thirty-seven lines. Then follow, in about five hundred lines, the works and deaths of the Apostles, beginning with St. Peter. The poet has by this time written twenty thousand lines, feels that he must be drawing to a close, and says he shall be brief.

> "For þis boke has no noþer rume:
> It es na spede vr suinc* to spend
> On þing we mai not bring til end."

Next follows, also in about five hundred lines, the tale of Elene, or the Finding of the True Cross.† This closes the account of the Sixth Age of the World, and says one of the MSS.:—

> "Now is good for to wende
> To speke of this worldé's end."

This part opens with legends of Antichrist, who will be born in Babylon, "a tun o selcuth mikel pride," as Christ was born in humble

* Labour. † "E. W." II. 196, 197.

Bethlehem, a place of grace. About five hundred and eighty lines are given to the setting forth of Antichrist; then follow the Signs on the Fifteen Days before Judgment, and then Doomsday itself, and the Burning of the World, with much legendary detail, leading on to a description of the nine chief pains in Hell, and the seven gifts of the blessed in Heaven. Then is set forth what will be the condition of the Good, the Bad, and the Renewed World after its burning; and the last thought closing the Homily that is interwoven with this narrative carries home the conviction that here is the time for our new life to begin. Every day brings its own summons to be ready. Says the poet-preacher of his own labour among men:—

"Aye to spell and not to speed,
Wasting it is of Godé's seed;
Ill worth it is to till the field
That not again the seed will yield.

. . . .

All that written is in writ
Wrought is for to teach us wit
How we owe to lead our life.
Christian folk, both man and wife,
In elder men our mirror see
What for to follow, what for to flee:
The thingés that we self ne can
For to ask at other man,
And he that more can than another
Debonairly teach his brother:
All are we brether, young and old,
Christ for us was bought and sold,
He has us in his number told
As his sheep of his own fold."

The clergy have been chosen by him as herdsmen to feed his sheep. To each herdsman his talent has been given, of which he must give account.

"After that we took each one
Some for more and some for less,
After that our giftés wes.
He give us grace so to account
That we may to Heaven mount!

Here I have a little spend
In word after that I entend:
Might I more, God wot my mood,
I owe it all to spend in good."

Then follows a Prayer to our Lady, a poem of a hundred and thirty-one six-lined stanzas on the Sorrows of the Virgin, the story of the Festival of the Conception, and the seven additions already mentioned.

Spirit of the "Cursor Mundi."

The spirit of the "Cursor Mundi" has been shown in the preceding outline of its substance. It is the work of a teacher who felt bound to turn to a good use whatever talent was entrusted to him. He was an English priest and a man of the people, who put aside Latin and French to speak in their own language to his countrymen, and tell them in attractive form the story of God's world and of God's love to man. Especially he brings home comfort to the poor. Though terrors have their place in the account of Doomsday, the pleading of the "Cursor Mundi" with the souls of men, by choice of matter and by interspersed passages of exhortation, suggests habitually the watersprings to which a God of Love calls all who thirst, all who are weary and heavy laden. The God shown to the people in the "Cursor Mundi" is He who shall feed His flock like a shepherd, who shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom. The peasantry who gathered round at the recital of these tales were taught that God is good; and sent home comforted by the words of a man who felt with them and gently warned them to put off their evil ways and turn their hearts to Christ who loved and pitied them and died for them. There is no record on earth, but there is record in heaven, of the name of the good priest who thus used the talent that had been entrusted to him. His light was clouded with the mist of legends that had spread over the teaching of the Church; but if his faith accepted them, it

turned them also into parables from which he sought only to draw the purest spiritual truth.*

Saints' Legends and Homilies.

Homily and Church legend are interwoven in the "Cursor Mundi" with the Bible story illustrating the great days of religious commemoration in the Christian Church. The elements here blended had their separate existence strongly marked by growth, in the north especially, of a great body of homilies; and in the south especially, of a great body of saints' legends; following the order of the calendar appointed for Church services throughout the year. Saints' legends attained fullest maturity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and grew up in association with the offices of the Church. The "hours" of daily prayer and meditation—name applied also to the prayers themselves—were certain twelfth parts of the day between sunrise and sunset, longer therefore

* The only printed edition of the "Cursor Mundi" is that of the four texts edited by Dr. Richard Morris and published by the Early English Text Society in five sections: "Cursor Mundi (The Cursor of the World). A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth Century, in Four Versions, two of them Midland." From Cotton. MS. Vesp. A iii. in the Library of the British Museum; Fairfax MS. 14 in the Bodleian Library; MS. Theol. 107 in the Göttingen University Library; MS. R. 3, 8 in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge: edited by the Rev. Richard Morris, LL.D. Part I. 1874; Part II. 1875; Part III. 1876; Part IV. 1877; Part V. 1878. In 1884 Dr. Haenisch published his Breslau dissertation on the sources of the legends in the poem, "Inquiry into the Sources of the 'Cursor Mundi.'" The relation to one another of the extant MSS. of the "Cursor Mundi" was the subject of a dissertation at Göttingen by Dr. Hupe: "Genealogie und Ueberlieferung der Handschriften des mittenglischen Gedichtes, 'Cursor Mundi,'" published at Altenburg in 1886. In the eleventh volume of "Englische Studien" (1888), edited by Dr. Eugen Kölbing, is an article designed as a sequel to Hupe's Dissertation, by M. Kaluza, of Königsberg, "Zum Handschriftenverhältniss und zur Textkritik des 'Cursor Mundi.'" The inferences in this paper are drawn from minute comparison of texts, but the result does not encourage the hope of exactly ascertaining an original text by study of the extant MSS.

in summer than in winter. They were based on the third verse of the 113th Psalm, "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised;" and on the 164th verse of the 119th Psalm, "Seven times a day do I praise Thee." The hours of the Church were seven, and became eight when frequent disuse of one led to addition of another. The hours were: the nocturns at midnight or cockcrow; matins, called also lauds—from the Psalms of praise then read—in one of the three hours before sunrise; prime in the first hour after sunrise; terce, sexte, and none in the third, sixth, and ninth hours after sunrise; and vespers in the last hour before sunset. Disuse of prime led to the substitution of compline—completorium—a last service before going to rest. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries night service had ceased, and the nocturns and matins were read together at daybreak, the name of lauds being transferred to the second service of the day. At first these hours had their devotion aided only by the reading of the Psalms, with intervening periods of silence for prayer and meditation; the Book of Psalms having been so distributed through them by St. Jerome that it was read through in a week. Readings from the canonical epistles and from the gospels or prophecies were at first confined to the mass. Readings may have been first introduced to fill the time in the long hours of the winter nights. Readings from Scripture were first introduced, between the Psalms. In the Benedictine Rule it was provided that in the winter half of the year, when the nocturns were lengthened, three readings from the Old or New Testament or the Interpretations of the Fathers,—with chanted responses after each, and the Gloria after the last,—should be given by the monks in turn at the reading desk, the brothers sitting. These readings were at first not to be given in the shorter night hours of the summer, but they spread afterwards

over the whole year, and came to include readings from the lives of saints.

To provide fit matter from the doctors and Fathers of the Church for such reading in the winter nocturns, a collection was made by Paulus Diaconus at the command of Charlemagne, which came to be ascribed to Alcuin, while in England selections were made from the works of Bede. There is evidence of early use of the "Acta Martyrum" in Church Service; it was allowed by the third Council of Carthage, when it forbade the use of apocryphal books of Scripture. Sometimes it was forbidden to read even a martyr's life in the Church Service on the day for celebration of his martyrdom. But the restriction passed away, the short record of the "Acta Martyrum" was read during mass before the epistle for the day, and the bishop afterwards from the pulpit explained to the people the lessons to be drawn by Christians from the martyr's life that had been given for the love of God. In that way arose the "Sermones Patrum in Honorem Sanctorum." Eusebius mentions in his own writings a general Martyrology compiled by him, which at the end of the sixth century no longer existed. The lost work of Eusebius may have been the foundation of a Latin martyrology by Jerome, and later work of that kind may have sprung from Jerome's martyrology, either directly or through a Syriac or through an Irish version. Another early custom was that after Primes the monks and canons went into the chapter-house—so called from the reading of such chapters there—and sat to hear a reading of a chapter from the martyrology, with the acts of the saint whose memory was to be cherished on the day next following, this being intended to prepare the mind for the new subject of contemplation. This reading was followed by the reading of some suitable psalms and prayers. The martyrology was but a brief arrangement of the names of martyred saints,

according to their order in the calendar. But from early time religious houses sought to collect full details of the lives of saints to which they were dedicated, or who were high in local esteem. The lives of saints thus multiplied, and found their way first into the reading at nocturns; then into the Church service, before the epistle, on the days of special celebration of a patron saint; and they were then, as we have seen, more directly presented to the eyes of the people as miracle plays. Winter nocturns were shortened when they were moved, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, from the night hours to the break of day. Many manuscripts contain only beginnings of saints' lives. An inference is that they were used in the shortened hour, and were beginnings of a reading that was left to be finished by the lector at the noontide meal in the refectory.

It was also from old time permitted to the clergy to read sermons by acknowledged doctors of the Church when they were in any way prevented from preparing sermons of their own. This led to a demand for homilies, and gave rise to the collecting of homilies into sequences, of which the Homilies of Ælfric* are our first conspicuous example. In like manner the increasing demand for well-elaborated lives of saints led to endeavour towards a full collection of saints' lives that should, like the short Martyrology from which it sprang, follow in its arrangement the whole course of the Church year.

In England the religious energy that marked the temper of the people pushed forward the development of these two forms of literature. In the north, with Durham for the centre of activity, there was especial heed given to the homilies, with an admixture of legend. In the south, with Gloucester for the centre of activity, there was especial heed given to the legends, with an admixture of homily. The distinction is well marked. English thought in the north has

* "E. W." II. 312, 313.

vigorous delight in logical and metaphysical divisions and distinctions. This taste was, through many generations, gratified in our far north by sermons that worked their way in peace through a "fifteenthly," where a "fifthly" would have broken down the patience of a southern congregation. We shall find that the north of England—of which Scotland is part—has produced most of our good metaphysicians.

Soon after the production of the "Cursor Mundi" the collection of northern homilies took shape. They also were in octosyllabic couplets, and they followed the Gospels for the successive Sundays of the year, with free translation or paraphrase, with exposition according to Pope Gregory, or Bede, or other Fathers of the Church, and with usually an added tale to enforce interpretation by example. The illustrative tale is an addition to the earlier conception of this form of teaching as it has been seen already in the Ormulum.* The oldest manuscript of this collection, which seems to be mainly the work of one writer, is in the Edinburgh College of Physicians, and is of the beginning of the fourteenth century. Many copies were made from it, with additions and free variations; two of them, still extant, are in the southern dialect.† Their title, as given in Prologue and at the end of a manuscript, was "the Sunday Gospels of the Whole Year, Explained in the Language of the People," as at the end of the Ashmole MS., "Expliciunt Evangelia Dominicalia totius Anni in vulgari lingua exposita." The sequence of the collection was based on the Durham Missal.

The Northern Evangelia Dominicalia.

The collection of the southern English legendary began, as the work of many hands, in the Abbey of Gloucester at the close of the thirteenth century. Robert of Gloucester ‡ may have been a chief

The Southern Legendarium.

* "E. W." III. 232. † Cambridge MS. Dd. 1, 1; and Vernon MS.
‡ "E. W." III. 339.

director of the work. He used its Life of Becket for his Chronicle; and he took from his Chronicle the geographical introduction to its Life of St. Kenelm. Its collection began before or at the same time with the Latin collection of the Golden Legend by Jacobus de Voragine. The oldest of its existing MSS. was written about 1280–90, and that has been edited for the Early English Society by Dr. C. Horstmann, who has made a special study of our early English legends, and who has given the fullest information on this subject.*

The measure of our Southern English legendary is not the rhymed couplet of eight-syllabled lines or lines of four accents, but the rhymed couplet of lines with seven accents that were commonly used in our early ballad literature. They appealed to the same audience, and were stories full of incident and action, though their heroes were saints in the place of the bold men of Otterburn or Sherwood Forest. Thus in the Legend of St. James we are told how after his death thirty pilgrims went together to his shrine in Galicia and plighted troth to abide by one another in all trials and distresses on the way; but one of the thirty

* Dr. Horstmann first published a "Sammlung Alt-Englischer Legenden, grösstentheils zum erstenmale herausgegeben" (8vo. Heilbronn, 1878), and this was succeeded by "Alt-Englische Legenden, Neue Folge; mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen" (8vo. Heilbronn, 1881). The introductory matter to this volume consists of 136 closely-printed pages, which contain a very thorough study of the origin and character of our early legends and homilies. To this volume especially the student is referred for further information. Dr. Horstmann has edited other collections of legends, afterwards to be spoken of, and aims at the publication of the whole body of our early English legends, with a study of their literary history. He has already begun upon the MSS. of the southern legendary by printing for the Early English Text Society (1887) the earliest MS. of the southern legendary, "The Early South-English Legendary, or Lives of Saints. I. MS. Laud, 108, in the Bodleian Library. Edited by Dr. Carl Horstmann." But of its six pages of introduction, why is one thrown away upon a grumble at "the present British public"?

would not take a solemn pledge, he only said that he would abide by any comrade in distress. Another of the thirty fell ill on the way; all waited for him until the delay had lasted fifteen days; then they went on, leaving him to the care of God and of the one pilgrim whose word was stronger than their oath. That pilgrim stayed until the sick man died, and he yet stayed by the dead body, not knowing what he should do, unless Saint James would help him. Saint James came riding to him as a knight.

"'Cum here,' he seidé, 'furth with me, ne have þou of no þing drede,
Bifor me cast þat bodi her, and ich it wolle hennés lede,
And lupe þu up behind me.'"

Before morning they had ridden fifteen days' journeys and reached the end of the pilgrimage, where Saint James sent the dead man to be buried within his sanctuary, and bade the living pilgrim who had kept faith tell his fellows that he was at the shrine before them though he stayed behind, and that they all had lost their labour. Then the saint vanished.

"Aboute þat bodi for þis miracle folk cam þické reke.
Here man mai sum-del i-seo whuch it is treouþe to breke,
And hwuch it is þane holie wey to seint Iemes for to go.
þis miracle is so murie, ich mot yeot telle of mo.

Hit was a good man and is sone, þat toward seint Iemes wende,
To þe cité of Tolouse;"

and so forth. The saints' legends competed, in fact, with the secular tales; and their writers wished them to be current among the people, as familiar and welcome as the ballads. Whenever the advance of good sense shall enable educated Englishmen to draw refreshment from the stream of their own literature near the spring, these legends that fed the imaginations of our forefathers, and formed a chief

part of the fiction of their day, will come into life again as pleasant reading, full of odd inventions that recall much of the spirit of the past.

In the same manuscript that contains the romance of "Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight" are three alliterative poems in west-midland dialect which have been edited for the Early English Text Society by Dr. Richard Morris.* One of these poems —upon Cleanness—enforces purity of life by a series of Bible stories. Another, entitled Patience, is a paraphrase of the Book of Jonah. The most beautiful of the three enforces Resignation, and Dr. Morris has well named it "The Pearl." They all are the work of a poet who had true feeling, and probably were all suggested to him by the grief which is the theme of the first poem in the series —the death of an innocent child, his own two-year-old daughter, his darling Pearl. Out of his home affliction and out of his Bible study he drew always the one lesson, that we owe to God pure lives in patient resignation to His will.

Alliterative Poems. "The Pearl."

"The Pearl" is a father's outpouring of love over the grave of his lost little one, his precious pearl without a spot. Never, the mourner says, was song so sweet as that which steals to him in the stillness there; sweet flowers cover her earth-dwelling. And there, when the August reapers put the sickle in the corn, he sleeps in heaviness of grief as he laments the loss of her whom he tenderly calls again and again "My precious Pearl, withouten spot."

Then comes the dream. His body lies upon the grave, his "ghost is gone in Godés grace" to a strange land of

* "Early English Alliterative Poems in the West-Midland Dialect of the Fourteenth Century. Copied and Edited from a Unique Manuscript in the Library of the British Museum, Cotton. Nero A x., with an Introduction, Notes, and Glossarial Index. By Richard Morris." 1864; second edition, 1869.

light and beauty, where the cliffs are clear as crystal, the leaves upon the trees as burnished silver, the small stones of the ground as orient pearl. There in a glorious wood he followed the sweet music of a stream in which pebbles glittered as the stars that shine through winter night over the sleepers. Earthly heart cannot contain such gladness as this gave; and Paradise, he thought, must be upon the other bank.

"But the water was deep, I durst not wade,
And ever me longéd a more and more.

"More and more, and yet well more,
Me lest * to see the brook beyond;
For if it was fair there I con fare,†
Well loveloker ‡ was the fyrre § lond."

In vain he sought to find a ford, and presently he saw new marvel. A crystal cliff poured out many a royal ray, and at its foot there sat a child, a gentle maiden, shining white. "I knew her well, I had seen her ere." And long he looked towards her. "The longer, I knew her more and more." He would call, and feared to call to her in that strange place. She lifted up her face, white as pure ivory; that went to his heart, "And ever the longer, more and more"—

"More than me list my dread arose,
I stood full still and durst not call;
With eyen open and mouth full close
I stood as hend as hawk in hall."

He feared lest he should lose her if he broke the silence. Then fresh as a lily she came down the bank towards him; and he dwells upon her purity of beauty, and her bright array; a wondrous pearl, without a spot, in midst her breast was set so sure. She advanced to him, bent low

* It pleased me. † Where I could go. ‡ Lovelier. § Farther.

to him in woman's wise; with a faint sound she greeted him from beyond the stream.

"O Pearl, adorned with pearls," he said, "art thou my Pearl that I have plained?* What fate hath brought my jewel hither, and caused me this grief? for since we two were parted I have been a joyless jeweller." Then came to him the voice of consolation. The Pearl is not lost, but is in that gracious garden where no sin comes near her—is become indeed a pearl of price.

"'And thou has called thy wyrd † a thief
That aught of naught has made thee clear,
Thou blames the bote of thy mischief ‡
Thou art no kindé Jewelere.'

"A Jewel to me then was this geste
And jewels wern her gentle saws,
I wis, quoth I, my blissful best,
My great distress thou all to-draws." §

Henceforth, says the glad father, I will live in joy—

"'And love my Lord and all His laws
That has me brought this blissé near;
Now were I at you beyond these wawes' ||
I were a joyful Jewelere."

But his Pearl teaches him that he errs in thinking that she is with him because his eyes behold her; that he errs in thinking he can be with her; that he errs in thinking he can freely pass this water that flows between. He must abide God's time; and he can cross only through death. Then rises again the note of despair for the child's loss. She replies with the lesson of Christian Patience. He must not strive against God. He answers sadly and humbly to her gentle rebuke, and asks her of the life she

* Bewailed, lamented. † Fate. ‡ The remedy of thy misfortune.
§ Thou completely drawest from me. || Waves.

is now leading. He may know her bliss, for now his meekness, she says, is dear to her—

"'My Lord, the Lamb, loves aye such cheer,
That is the ground of all my bliss.

"'A blissful life thou says I lead,
Thou wouldest know thereof the stage,
Thou wost well when thy Pearl con schede *
I was full young and tender of age;

"'But my Lord, the Lamb, through His God-hede,
He took myself to his marriáge,
Corouned me Queen in bliss to brede,†
In length of days that e'er shall wage.‡

"'And seised in all His heritage
His lief § is, I am wholly His:
His praise, His price, || and his parage ¶
Is root and ground of all my bliss.'"

But, says the father, "Art *thou* the Queen to whom all this world shall do honour? Can any take the crown from Mary?" Then the child vision kneels in worship to the Virgin before telling of the many mansions in Heaven, and of the crowns of glory that make kings and queens of all who enter, each delighting in the honour of the other. Still the father asks to be taught. She lived but two years upon earth, was too young to have learned Pater or Creed —and queen made on the first day! The child-angel answers.

"'There is no date of God's goodnéss,'
Then said to me that worthy wight,
'For all is truth that He con dress,**
And He may do no thing but right.'"

* At the time of thy Pearl's departure.
† Broaden, increase.
‡ Endure.
§ His dear one, his bride.
|| Worth.
¶ Kindred, exalted nature.
** Direct, order.

She tells him our Lord's parable of the vineyard. She too was in the vineyard but a little while, and "was paid anon of all and some." The dialogue then dwells upon God's taking to Himself the little ones, who have been baptised to Him, and have not lived till they could sin. They who live longer are tempted more, but let them pray and strive to keep their innocence—to be as the children whom Christ blessed and would have come to Him, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. Forsake the mad ways of the world, and seek the kingdom that is like a pearl without a spot.

> "'O maskelless * Pearl, in pearlés pure,
> That bears,' quoth I, 'the pearl of price,
> Who formed thee thy fair figúre?
> That wrought thy weed he was full wise.'"

She is adorned, she answers, by the Lamb, whose bride she is; the Lamb without spot who patiently suffered, and whose brides are the souls of the innocent and patient. She recalls the Vision of John. "I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Can there be castles enough in Jerusalem for many brides? the father asks. In the old Jerusalem, he is told, men sinned and the Saviour suffered; but in the new Jerusalem is peace only. There the Lamb gathers His own; there we seek home after our flesh is laid in earth. Then the father begs of his spotless maid so meek and mild that she will bring him to see that blissful bower. He can see only its outside, she says, but if he will trace the stream up to its source he will find a hill from which he can look out upon the distant glory of that city. Eagerly he seeks the hill, and sees from it the new Jerusalem. When he has dwelt upon its glories, the moon rises, and white-robed virgins

issue from the city, each having bound on her breast the blissful pearl. They come forth in love and delight. The Lamb is before, and before the Lamb the elders bow. Legions of angels fill the air with a sweet incense, and a sweet song rises in praise of the Lamb that was slain. The father looks among the shining company of those whose home is with the Lamb, and there he sees his little queen in peace and joy, and yearns towards her with love-longing in great delight. His delight urges him to seek to cross the stream and be with her. By the vain struggle his dream is broken, and he awakes to grief, with his head upon the little hill over his buried Pearl.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN GOWER.

GOWER, Chaucer, Langland, Wyclif are the four great writers of the fourteenth century. They were all four men working at the same time, their genius developed under like outward conditions, and practically men of like age, with their birth-years at no very great distance apart. John Gower is usually supposed to have been some years older than Chaucer. The year of his birth cannot be fixed. He died a blind old man in the year 1408, outliving Chaucer by eight years of passive life.

Of Gower's birthplace and parentage there have been differing accounts. Caxton, who in 1483 printed the first edition of his "Confessio Amantis," said that John Gower was "a squire born in Wales in the time of Richard II." As Richard II. was not king until 1377, the authority for the period here said to be that of Gower's birth was manifestly but a loose guess and a bad one. When the place of his birth is at the same time said to be Wales, the error arises from two causes. One cause is association of name with that of the peninsula of Gower, in which Henry I. planted his colony of Flemings, and where the people to this day maintain some distinction of race in dress, dialect, and customs, marry among themselves, and keep themselves apart from their Welsh neighbours. The other misleading fact is that before the reign of Richard II., yet actually during the first years of the

Life of Gower.

poet's life, the See of St. David's was held (from 1328 to 1347) by its munificent benefactor Bishop Henry le Gower, the "Menevian Wykeham," who adorned the cathedral throughout with harmonious additions and enrichments, and built the palace, stamping the character of a fresh mind on every graceful detail in the Decorated style that was of his own originating. As this most famous of the bishops of St. David's founded and endowed a hospital at Swansea, he doubtless was a native of the peninsula. But there is no trace whatever of relationship between this bishop and the poet.

Leland said that John Gower was one of the Gowers of Stittenham in Yorkshire—an error copied by Bale, Pits, and Holinshed. The Rev. H. J. Todd * unsuccessfully attempted to produce documentary evidence in support of this tradition, which connects the poet with the Gower family that has for present head the Duke of Sutherland, who is also Earl Gower. But the arms of the poet differ entirely from those of the Gowers of Stittenham; the poet's will makes no reference to Yorkshire; and it has since been proved, from an examination of the Close Rolls by Sir Harris Nicolas,† who has thrown more light than any one else upon the life of Gower, that the poet was a rich man—John Gower, Esquire, of Kent, close kindred to a knight, Sir Robert Gower, who had property in Suffolk and manors in other counties. Sir Robert was interred in the church of Brabourne, a small village about five miles east of Ashford in Kent, where his effigy was placed, holding

* "Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer." Collected from authentic documents by the Rev. Henry J. Todd, M.A., F.S.A. (London, 1810). Dedicated to the Most Noble George Granville Leveson Gower, Marquis of Stafford, K.G., &c. &c., as "the friend of literature, and the head of the illustrious house of Gower."

† In the *Retrospective Review* for 1828, N.S., vol. ii., pp. 103–117.

a shield with the same bearings as those on the tomb of the poet: argent on a chevron azure, three leopards' faces or; the crest, on a chapeau, a gower (that is, a wolf-dog) passant.*

Of Sir Robert Gower written trace remains in deeds executed by him for acquisition and transfer of property. In 1333 (on the 25th of June) the manor of Kentwell, with appurtenances, in Suffolk, was granted by David de Strabolgi, Earl of Athol, to Sir Robert Gower, knight, his heirs and assigns. Six years later it was confirmed to him in fee by the king. Ten years later, in 1349, Sir Robert Gower being dead, it was granted to Katherine Countess of Athol, until Sir Robert's heir became of age, the Countess paying twenty marks a year. The heir, then not of age, was Sir Robert Gower's daughter Katherine. John Gower may have been his younger brother, or his brother's son. As he is styled in his own will "Esquire," and was so described also on the ledge of his tomb, John Gower was not a knight. Well born he must have been, for he used coat-armour at a time when such matters were looked to. Leland made Gower a lawyer;† others, equally without ground, made him a judge.‡ Certainly he was well educated, whether at universities or otherwise, and wrote with ease and refinement in French, Latin, and English. It will presently appear that he had really some connexion with the Church.

Sir Robert Gower left two daughters, Katherine and Joan. Katherine died in 1366, owning lands at Radwater, in Essex, and half the manor of Kentwell, with Kentwell

* The arms of the Yorkshire Gowers are barry, argent, and gules, a cross patee flore, sable; and their crest, a wolf passant, argent, collared, and chained, or.

† "Coluit forum et patrias leges lucri causa."—"Comment. de Script. Brit.," p. 414.

‡ Mr. Foss ("Judges of England," vol. iv., p. 28) finds in the fourteenth century no judge named Gower.

Hall. Her heir was Joan, who had been a child of six when her father died, and was then twenty-three years old, the wife of William Neve, of Wyting. There remains a special pardon, dated in December of that year, granted to William Neve and Joanna his wife, for entering on Kentwell at the sister's decease without process in the king's court, or performance of homage. The lands had been therefore seized, and were restored on payment of a hundred shillings fine. Neve soon died, and within two years Joanna was married again; for in June, 1368, Thomas Syward, pewterer and citizen, with his wife Joan, daughter of Sir Robert Gower, were granting to John Gower —that is to say, to Gower the poet—the manor of Kentwell, with its appurtenances.

In 1365 John Gower was a feoffee of the Kentish manor of Aldington—that parish of ours which has had Erasmus on its list of rectors—and Gower had a grant also of a rental of ten pounds out of the manor of Wigborough in Essex. In 1369 John Gower acquired for two hundred marks silver from John and Joan Spenythorn their rights in the manor of Kentwell, except a rent of ten pounds. The John Gower who transacts this business, and uses the same arms that were placed upon the poet's tomb, corresponds too nearly with the poet in age to have been his father. Having the same Christian name, he could not have been his brother; and had he been a first-cousin, there would probably have been some difference in the armorial bearings. But the identification of this Gower with the poet is yet more complete. In September, 1373, a deed was executed by John Gower at Otford, in Kent,* signed with his arms and crest, appointing feoffees of his manor

* Otteford. Sir Harris Nicolas supposed—or, more probably, a misprint of *r* for *t* made him appear to suppose—this place to be Orford (in Suffolk). It is obviously Otford, in Kent. Dr. Pauli only repeats from Sir H. Nicolas.

of Kentwell, in Suffolk, fifteen miles distant from another manor of his, which is among those named in his will. One of the feoffees appointed was Sir John Cobham,* who was of Hever, in Kent. Sir John Cobham named in his own will another Kentish neighbour and friend, Sir Arnold Savage, as executor. Sir John Cobham's nephew Reginald married Sir Arnold Savage's daughter Isabel. The same Sir Arnold Savage signed his name as a witness to the will of their other neighbour and friend, John Gower the poet. Gower's home in Kent, in that year 1373, seems, then, to have been on the banks of the Darent, by the pleasant hills at Otford, where the valley of the river opens on the meadows and thick woodlands of south-western Kent, and where, in the poet's time, the archbishops of Canterbury had an old favourite seat, which, it is said, had wanted only a good well till Thomas à Becket struck the ground with his staff, and so gave rise to the clear spring which is called St. Thomas's Well until this day.

In February, 1381, Isabella, daughter of Walter de Huntingfield, remitted her right in lands of the parishes of Throwley and Stalesfield, both in Kent, to John Gower and John Bowland, clerk. Another deed shows that in 1382 "John Gower, Esquire, of Kent," acquired legal possession of the manors of Feltwell in Norfolk, and Moulton in Suffolk. Here the identification of the Kentish Gower is complete, as that manor of Moulton was devised to his wife by John Gower the poet in his will. In June, 1385, Isabella Huntingfield, "of the county of Kent," remitted to John Gower, "of the same county," for herself and her heirs, all actions, plaints, and demands that may have arisen between them from the beginning of the world up to that

* Besides Sir John Cobham, the other feoffees were the rector of Tunstal, a Kentish parish; Roger of Ashburnham, in Sussex, not very far over the Kentish border; Thomas de Brockhill, probably of Brockley, in Kent; and William Weston, it is not told of what place.

day. For these clear indications of John Gower's home and worldly position we are indebted to his prudent care in having all leases and releases to which he was a party entered on the rolls of Chancery.

In 1393–4 Henry of Lancaster presented a collar to John Gower, in acknowledgment perhaps of pleasure taken in his English poem, then completed. At a later date he must have received the collar of SS, with the appendage of a small swan chained, which is about the neck of the effigy upon his tomb; for it was not until the year 1397, after the death of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, that Henry of Lancaster assumed the swan as his badge.

It was also in the year 1397 that John Gower, who with infirm health had reached his seventieth year, took a wife. There is no evidence of any previous marriage, and he mentions no child in his will. But his will provides for his widow, and does not dispose of all his property, Kentwell being among the possessions that he does not mention. The undevised estate would go, without act of bequest, to the next heir, who might be a son or daughter. A Thomas Gower, of Clapham, staunch Lancastrian, who fell at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, had some property in Southwark, where the poet lived in his last years, and it is just possible that he may have been John Gower's grandson or great-grandson. But it is only known, through an extract from the registry of William of Wykeham, preserved at Winchester, that by a licence dated the 25th of January 1397, John Gower was married to Agnes Groundolf by the chaplain of their parish church of St. Mary Magdalene, Southwark, not in the parish church itself, but in a chapel of Gower's own, under his quarters in the priory of St. Mary Overies.*

* ". . . Extra ecclesiam parochialem, in oratorio ipsius Joannis Gower infra hospicium cum in prioratu B. Mariæ de Overee in Suthwerk prædicta situatum, solempnizare valeas . . . '

St. Mary Overies—*i.e.* St. Mary-over-the-River—was a religious house said to have originated in a priory of nuns, founded by a Mary who there owned a ferry before London Bridge was built, and to have been endowed by her with the profits of the ferry. If so, it was re-founded in 1106 as a priory for Canons Regular. In the year 1207 the original priory was burnt down, and when it was rebuilt there was added by Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester, a spacious chapel where the parish church now stands. The priory was again rebuilt in the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV. The masons were still at their work when John Gower, who was the most liberal contributor towards the cost of rebuilding, established lodgings and a chapel of his own in the new priory, and spent his last years peacefully among its clergy, within shadow of the church of which he was an honoured benefactor. He lived there as a clerk among clerks, for I find in the list of rectors of the parish of Great Braxted, in Essex, that John Gower, described not as priest but as clerk, obtained that living (which is now worth £552 a year, with residence and sixty-five acres of glebe land) by the gift of Richard II. in February, 1390, and resigned it in March, 1397—that is to say, upon his marriage.* This fact has not hitherto been observed in connection with the poet's life; but that John Gower, clerk, who by the king's gift held the living of Braxted Magna from the year 1390 till his marriage, could have been nobody but the poet, is confirmed, if there be need of confirmation, by the fact that Braxted parish is little more than a mile distant from the parish of Wigborough, out of the manor of which we have seen that John Gower the poet had a grant of ten pounds from the rental.† He is thus known

* Newcourt's "Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense" (1710), vol. ii., p. 91, where the name is given without note or comment in the list of the rectors of Braxted Magna.

† In 39 Edw. III., 1365, granted from the manor of Wygebergh

to have owned property in the immediate neighbourhood of Great Braxted before he was made rector of that parish. He was not in priest's orders, and in the "Confessio Amantis" calls himself a "borel clerk;" but his holding of the living as a "clerk," and subsequent marrying into a home among the clergy of St. Mary Overies,* show that the wealthy poet lived in closer personal relation to the Church than has been hitherto supposed.

Three years after his marriage Gower became blind, and ceased to write. In his poem "De Pacis Commendatione," in praise of King Henry IV., Gower says that it was in the first year of Henry's reign that he became blind;† and in MSS. of the "Vox Clamantis" he writes that in the second year of Henry IV.'s reign, because he was blind, he ceased to write.‡ Henry was crowned in October, 1399; and 1400 might be called either the first or second year of his reign. From that date, therefore, for the next eight years,

by William, son of William Septuanus, knight, to John Gower and his heirs, with release at the same time by a second instrument of the manor of Aldyngton in Kent, with the rent of 14s. 6d., and of one cock, thirteen hens, and forty eggs, out of Maplescomb. Rot. Claus. 39 Edw. III., quoted by Sir Harris Nicolas, who left his readers to observe that there is now no Wygebergh in Essex, that being the old spelling of Wigborough.

* Sir Harris Nicolas, although the licence he cites is for a marriage, as stated, outside the parish church, has read it by oversight into evidence of a marriage in the parish church itself; and Dr. Pauli, who in the biographical sketch prefixed to his edition of the "Confessio Amantis" repeats the information given by Sir Harris Nicolas without further digestion, copies the mistake, thereby also missing the evidence it supplies (when read in connection with the poet's will) that Gower's "hospitium" was in the priory during the last eleven years of his life.

† "Henrici quarti primus regni fuit annus
Quo mihi defecit visus ad acta mea."

‡ "Henrici regis annus fuit ille secundus,
Scribere dum cesso, sum quia cecus ego."

the infirm poet spent the evening of his life at St. Mary Overies in retirement from all worldly affairs except pious and liberal support of the advancing building-works in the priory, and in the church now known as St. Saviour's,* to which he bequeathed his body. His will, made not long before death, bequeathed his soul to God, his body to be buried in St. Mary Overies. The poet bequeathed also 13s. 4d. to each of the four parish churches of Southwark for ornaments and lights, besides 6s. 8d. for prayers to each of their curates. It is not less characteristic that he left also 40s. for prayers to the master of St. Thomas's Hospital, and, still for prayers, 6s. 8d. to each of its priests, 3s. 4d. to each Sister in the hospital, twenty pence to each nurse of the infirm there, and to each of the infirm twelve pence. There were similar bequests to St. Thomas Elsing Spital, a priory and hospital that stood where now stands Sion College. St. Thomas Elsing Spital, founded in 1329 by William Elsing, was especially commended to the sympathies of the blind old poet, as it consisted of a college for a warden, four priests, and two clerks, who had care of one hundred old, blind, and poor persons of both sexes, preference being given to blind, paralytic, and disabled priests. Like legacies were bequeathed also to Bedlam, without Bishopsgate; and to St. Mary's Hospital, Westminster. Also there were bequests of ten shillings to each of the leper-houses. Two robes (one white silk, the other of blue baudkin, a costly stuff with web of gold and woof of silk), also a new dish and chalice and a new missal, were bequeathed to the perpetual service of the altar of the chapel of St. John the Baptist, in which his body was to be buried. To the prior and convent he left a great book, a Martyrology,

* After the dissolution of the priory the church of St. Mary Overies was bought of the king by the inhabitants of Southwark as a parish church, and, by Act of Parliament, united with that of St. Margaret's-of-the-Hill under its present name of St. Saviour's.

which had been composed and written for them at his expense. To his wife Agnes he left a hundred pounds, three cups, one coverlet, two salt-cellars, and a dozen silver spoons; also all his beds and chests, with the furnishings of hall, pantry, and kitchen; also a chalice and robe for the altar of the chapel of their house; and she was to have for life all rents due to him from his manors of Southwell (in Nottingham) and Moulton (in Suffolk). His wife Agnes and four friends—two of them lay, two of them clerical—were appointed John Gower's executors: the four being Sir Arnold Savage (who was of Kent); Roger, an esquire; William Denne, canon of the King's Chapel (the Dennes also were of Kent); and John Burton, clerk. The will was signed at the priory of St. Mary Overies (in Southwark) on the Feast of the Assumption (August 15th) in the year 1408, and the testator died so soon afterwards that on the 24th of October in the same year the will was proved; and administration of the property not specified therein was granted on the 7th of November.

Gower seems to have spent his last days in the Priory, and to have died surrounded by its clergy. Leland is right in saying that they honoured in the poet one who had contributed most liberally towards the cost of the recent rebuilding of their church. That he was a great benefactor of theirs an inscription on his monument attested. They buried him where he desired to lie in this church, and a handsome monument of carved stone was erected by them to his honour in the north aisle of the nave. Within the three arches of its canopy were painted Charity, Mercy, and Pity: Charity holding the device—

> "En toy qui est filz de Dieu le pere
> Sauve soit que gist souz cest piere."
> [In thee, which art of God the Fader sone,
> Sauved be he that lith under this stone];

Mercy holding the device—

" O bon Jesu fait ta Mercie
A lalme dont le corpe gist icy."
[O gode Jesu, thy mercy clere
The soule whose body is liggende here] ;

and Pity holding the device—

" Pour ta Pite Jesu regarde
Et met cest alme en sauve garde."
[For thy Pite, Jesu, see,
And may this soule be sauf in thee].

Séven niches were carved in front of the altar-tomb on the top of which the poet's effigy was placed. The head of the portrait-image rested on three volumes, inscribed with the titles of his three chief works :—"Speculum Meditantis" (which he had written in French), " Vox Clamantis " (which he had written in Latin), and " Confessio Amantis " (which he had written in English). Long auburn hair was represented falling in a large curl on the shoulders, and crowned with a chaplet of four roses, originally intermixed with ivy, " in token," says his editor Berthollet, " that he in his life daies flourished fresshely in literature and science." He was shown, with a small forked beard, wearing (from neck to feet) a long robe of purple (Speght says greenish) damask, buttoned down the front ; and round his neck was carved a collar of SS, from which hung a small swan chained, the badge of Henry IV. The poet's feet were represented resting on a lion, and above—within a panel of the side of the canopy—was a shield charged with his arms.

Under the figure of Mercy these leonine verses were inscribed :—

" Armigeri scutum nihil a modo fert tibi tutum ;
Reddidit immolutum morti generale tributum ;
Spiritus exutum se gaudeat esse solutum ;
Est ubi virtutum regnum sine labe statutum."

Which are to this effect:—

"No squire's shield defending will guard you from this way of ending;
He has paid the unbending Death's tax over all men impending;
Glad be the soul's wending, no more with the flesh interblending,
'Tis where, God amending, the Virtues reign free from offending."

On the ledge of the tomb was inscribed "Hic jacet J. Gower, arm. Angl. poeta celeberrimus ac huic sacro edificio benefac. insignis. Vixit temporibus Ed. III. et Ric. II." ("Here lies J. Gower, Esq., a most celebrated English poet, and to this sacred building a distinguished benefactor. He lived in the times of Ed. III. and Ric. II.") Near to this monument was hung a table, granting 1,500 days of pardon to all those who devoutly prayed for Gower's soul; and, according to a MS. of Nicholas Charles, Lancaster Herald, the arms of Gower were also placed in the highest south window of the body of the church, near the roof. The ancient church, in which other of our great writers afterwards were laid to rest, has been much meddled with since Gower's time. The nave was replaced by a poor substitute in 1840. The poet's tomb was restored in 1832 by the first Duke of Sutherland, who flattered himself that he was paying honour to an ancestor.

Besides the three works, in three languages, represented on his tomb as pillowing the head that gave them birth, there were among John Gower's writings some French "Balades," which remain to us in a copy of them made for presentation to King Henry IV.

Gower's "Balades."

Gower's Balades are in a thin oblong MS. on vellum, containing poems in Latin, French, and English. It belonged to Henry VII. when Earl of Richmond, as his signature on a blank leaf at the beginning of the MS. attests; and in 1656 it was presented by Lord Fairfax, Cromwell's general, to Sir Thomas Gower, inscribed by him "Sir John Gower's learned Poems, the same book by

himself presented to King" (Edward crossed out, and written over) "Henry y^e^ fourth *att* his Coronation;" "or before" was inserted over "att," and, the "att" and the "or" being then crossed out, "before his Coronation" was what stood. "For my honorable friend and kinsman S^r^ Thomas Gower, Knt. and Baronett, from T. Fairfax, 1656." The title of the Balades, and a part of the first of them, also a leaf containing part of a French poem addressed to Henry IV., have been mutilated; a page also is wanting between the short Latin poems which follow the Balades and a French poem on Marriage, which is, therefore, imperfect at the beginning. The MS. begins with an English panegyric in stanzas, having a Latin prologue in seven hexameters, on King Henry IV. This Song of the Commendation of Peace, in praise of Henry IV., was printed in Urry's edition of the works of Chaucer. Then follows a Latin poem in elegiacs, described as "a letter, in which the said John Gower prays devoutly to the Most High for the health and well-being of his said lord." But if the prayer be to the Most High, the address is in flattery and blessing to the earthly king: "O pie Rex, Christum per te laudamus et ipsum" ("O pious king, we praise even Christ Himself through you"). Then follows a balade to the king from the poet, who addresses him as—

> "Vostre oratour et vostre humble vassal
> Vostre Gower qest trestout vos soubgitz,"

in which the burden is that he has the advantage who puts trust in God: "Qen Dieu se fie il ad bel avantage," which formally introduces a small piece of complex Latin rhyme, praying the king for righteous rule, and that God may preserve him from all evil men; that Latin rhyme being presented as a fuller embodiment of the thought contained in the refrain of the balade. Then follow some mutilated and incomplete lines of French verse, among which is to

be distinguished part of the prelude to the fifty balades in which Gower offers to the king—in whom alone, next to God, he takes comfort when in grief—to make balades to entertain his noble court; and it will be especial joy to him if they please his Majesty.*

The "balades," to whose class these pieces belong, were one form of the artificial poetry into which language was musically tortured by the courtly poets of Provence, and courtiers elsewhere, who strained to exhibit more or less skill in an accomplishment that was regarded as a fit one for a well-trained gentleman. The soul spoke through their skilful work as seldom as the fire of our English youth now glows through the Latin verse made in accordance with old ways of Eton. Provençal pieces were called "vers," till Gerant de Borneil, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, is said to have first called them canzo and canzos (*chanson*); for theirs was, like that of the Greek odes, poetry made to be sung. The Provençals meant by a sonnet, a song with an instrumental accompaniment. The Italian sonnet, first established by Peter de Vinea, resembled this only in name; differing by its fixed number of lines, and the peculiar interlacement of the rhyming. But the Italian sonnet was by no means the most complex of these contrivances. Thus the sixtine, invented by Armand Daniel, sets out with a strophe of six lines, none of them rhyming, and then rings the changes, not on rhymes to them, but on actual repetition in succeeding strophes of the same, and never any other, final words,

Provençal and Italian rhyming.

Sonnet.

Sixtines.

> " Por desporter vo noble courte
> Jeo frai balade et sil a vous plerro
> Entre toutz autres joie men serroit
> Car en vous soul apres le Dieu aie
> Gist mon confort sascun me grieveroit
> Li Rois du ciel monseigneur vous mercie.

with artful variation, in this fashion, of the order of their recurrence in successive stanzas :—

a	b	c	d	e	f	.
f	a	e	b	d	c	
c	f	d	a	b	e	
e	c	b	f	a	d	
d	e	a	c	f	b	.

These words are shuffled carefully so as to recur upon a principle of fixed irregularity. The sixth and last of the end-words in one stanza is first of the next; then what was the first is second; what was next to the last is third; and what was next to the first, fourth; what was next to the next to the last is fifth; and what was next to the next to the first, sixth; and so on continually. Petrarch wrote sixtines; and examples of this kind of ingenuity may be studied in his thirty-seventh canzone ("Non ha tanti animali"), the thirty-eighth ("La ver l'aurora"), or the forty-sixth ("Mia benigna fortuna").

Balade.

Of the Provençal balade we may see the construction illustrated in these poems of Gower's. The first five are said * to have been made especially for those "who look for the issue of their loves in honest marriage;" the rest, to the close of the book, "are universal to all the world, according to the properties and conditions of lovers who are diversely experienced in the fortune of love." They are in each case (except that the ninth has five stanzas, and the thirty-second has its quatrain omitted by the copyist) formed of three stanzas of seven or eight—usually seven—lines and a final quatrain. The last syllables of the two first lines of each balade are to be rhymed with throughout the whole poem, except in the refrain or balade line that should close every stanza. That last line, or refrain, usually has a distinct rhyming sound, and one of

* In a note following the fifth.

the two next preceding lines rhymes with it. In eight of Gower's balades * even the refrain follows one of the dominant pair of rhymes. Four pieces,† which otherwise agree with the rest in form, have no refrain. Gower's ninth balade, which is of five stanzas, closes with the refrain of the first stanza, and has in its third and fourth stanzas the shadow of another. In one balade, the eighth, the refrain takes only those words of the last line which follow the cæsura.

These technical details mean, in fact, that a balade is such a poem as I now quote from among those written by Gower, adding a close English translation imitative of its manner :—

"Livern s'en vait et lestee vient flori
De froid en chald le temps se muera
Loisel qaincois avoit perdu son ny
Le renovelle v qils ses joiera
De mes amours ensi le monde va
Par tiel espoir je me conforte ades
Et vous ma dame croietz bien cela
Quant dolour vait les joies vienont pres.

"Ma doulce dame ensi come jeo vous di
Saver poetz coment mon coer esta
Le quel vous serve et lòng temps ad servi
Tant come jeo vive et toutditz servira.
Remembretz vous ma dame pour cela
Qa mon voloir ne vous lerrai james
Ensi come dieus le voet ensi serra
Qant dolour vait les joies vienont pres.

"Le jour qe jai de vous novelle oi
Il mest avis qe rien me grievera

* The ninth, thirteenth, eighteenth, twenty-second, twenty-fourth, thirty-sixth, thirty-ninth, and forty-fifth.

† The thirteenth, fourteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth.

Porceo ma chiere dame jeo vous pri
Par vo message quant il vous plerra
Mandetz a moi que bon vous semblera
Du quoi mon coer se poet tenir en pes
Et pensetz dame de ceo qai dit pieca
Quant dolour vait les joies vienont pres.

"O noble dame a vous ce lettre irra
Et quant dieu plest jeo vous verrai apres
Par cest escrit il vous remembrera
Quant dolour vait les joies vienont pres.

Which may be thus rendered into English:—

"Winter departs, and comes the flowery May,
And round from cold to heat the seasons fly;
The bird that to its nest had lost the way,
Rebuilds it, that he may rejoice thereby.
Like change in my love's world I now descry,
With such a hope I comfort myself here,
And you, my lady, on this truth rely:
When grief departs, the coming joys are near.

"My lady sweet, by that which now I say
You may discover how my heart leaps high,
That serves you and has served for many a day,
As it will serve you daily till I die.
Remember, then, my lady, knowing why,
That my desire for you will never veer.
As God wills that it be, so be our tie:
When grief departs, the coming joys are near.

"The day that news of you came where I lay,
It seemed there was no grief could make me sigh;
Wherefore of you, dear lady mine, I pray
By your own message—when you will, not I—
Send me what you think best as a reply
Wherewith my heart can keep itself from fear;
And, lady, search the reason of my cry,
'When grief departs, the coming joys are near.'

"O noble dame, to you this note shall hie,
And when God wills I follow to my dear.
This writing speaks, and says, till I am by,
'When grief departs, the coming joys are near.'"

John Gower's Balades in this MS. are followed by two short Latin poems, in elegiacs; a French poem, incomplete, on the Excellence of Marriage, with examples (this poem being found also added to some MSS. of the "Confessio Amantis"); and the collection closes with the Latin lines in which Gower told of his blindness. The Balades exist only in the Stafford MS., which was described by the Rev. Henry John Todd in his "Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer," and by Thomas Warton in an appendix to the second edition of his "History of English Poetry." The contents of this MS., omitting the already familiar Latin poem "De Pacis Commendatione" in praise of Henry IV., were first printed by Earl Gower for the Roxburghe Club in 1818.* Gower's minor poems.

Gower's Balades are commonly considered to have been written by him in his youth, that inference being drawn rather from their topic than from any direct evidence. It is inferred rather against evidence, for Gower, who was more than seventy years old at the accession of Henry IV., offered to make balades for the amusement of King Henry's courtiers. Love was then technically regarded as chief subject of the exercises of a courtly poet, who was to discourse ingeniously according to rules of his art of "properties and conditions of lovers who are diversely experienced in the fortune of love." A gentle troubadour might be, like Emperor Henry VI., a man who hanged, tortured, burnt, buried alive, and gouged out eyes, and dealt infamously with

* "Balades and other Poems," by John Gower. Printed from the original manuscript in the library of the Marquis of Stafford, at Trentham (London, 1818).

women. This temper did not affect his skill in the art of amatory versifying. For we must not lose sight of the marked distinction in the early literature of modern Europe between the idleness of a court poetry that seeks amusement in the graceful and ingenious adornment of a conventional theme after conventional fashions, and the earnestness of a national poetry that labours to enforce a true deep sense of living interests, according to men's perception of the light towards which souls that God has made grow naturally as His plants towards the sun.

CHAPTER VII.

GOWER'S "VOX CLAMANTIS."

JOHN GOWER was not only a court poet, he was also an Englishman of genius resolved to make the best use of his powers. That spirit which put into the first note of English song the heart of English literature— "For us it is very right that we praise with our words, love in our minds, the Keeper of the Heavens, Glory King of Hosts. He is the source of power"—that recognition of God, shown actively in the desire to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain—has been the strength of England and of the great writers by whom the mind of England is expressed. Ours is not technically a religious literature, it is not crying constantly "Lord, Lord;" but it does represent constant endeavour to get at the right, and do it. No human despot ever stayed its war against injustice. The descendants of those forefathers who were represented by a Cædmon, a Bede, and an Alfred have never for one generation ceased to labour for the useful and the true; to cry out boldly and earnestly against all real or apparent wrong; and practically to uphold the doing of his duty by each man, according to his place in life, as the chief earthly good. We have seen this throughout the literature before Chaucer. It is in the Mystery Plays; in the "Cursor Mundi;" in rhymed homilies and legends chanted with the tales and ballads that enlivened holidays. In Chaucer's time we find it everywhere. It is in the vigorous detail of

The spirit of English literature.

social evils in the "Vision of Piers Plowman;" that is to say, the Vision of Christ; with its last thought directed heavenward, and its last hope for the world built upon a search for Christ. It is in the labours of Wyclif and his followers, especially in their translation of the Bible into the familiar English speech. It is in Mandeville's Travels —designed as a guide of pilgrims to the Holy Land. It is in the Hermit of Hampole's "Pricke of Conscience," and in John Barbour's strain of liberty. Richard de Bury, loving books, attacks every misuse of them, and secures for his precious library the utmost usefulness, if possible, for ever. His friends Holcot and Bradwardine, to the best of their skill, bring their study of exact sciences into the service of what they believe in their souls to be the truth of God. And Gower is as genuine an Englishman.

Whenever there is a generation in this country cast on times that especially call forth the patriotic feeling and the independent energies of the best men, without taking away from them the leisure for deliberate expression of their minds, we have our writers busiest and best, because then most intent on true and exact utterance of what they strongly feel. The French wars of Edward III., accompanied by the domestic ills that raised vigorous protest in Richard II.'s reign, produced in England a great period of literature, with at its head Chaucer and Gower, men whose powers of expression had been strengthened by the recent influence of the Italian literary patriarchs upon the mind of Europe.

A contemporary copyist describes the chief works of Gower in a short sketch contained in some MSS.,* and printed in Caxton's edition of his English poem. There are two forms of the sketch, with variations caused by political changes. These sketches are usually ascribed to Gower himself; but the Latin is too bad to be

Gower's three books.

* MS. Harl. 3,869.

his, and their style that of some friendly contemporary editor, a religious man who is not clever at description. Thus he writes:—

"Because each man is bound to impart to others as he has received of God, John Gower, desiring while he has time somewhat to lighten the account of his stewardship over those things which God gave to him intellectually, has therefore, between his labours and rest, addressed to the knowledge of others three books, for the sake of instruction, in the manner following—

"The first book, put forth in the French language, is divided into twelve parts, and treating of the Vices and the Virtues, and of the various degrees of this age, seeks to teach, by a right path, the way whereby a transgressed sinner ought to return to the knowledge of his Creator. The title of that book is called 'Speculum Hominis' ['Speculum Meditantis'], the 'Mirror of Man' [the 'Mirror of one Meditating']. "Speculum Meditantis."

"But the second book, composed [metrically] in the Latin tongue [in verses of hexameter], treats (one description says) on that marvellous event which happened in England in the time of King Richard the Second, in the fourth year of his reign, when the servile rustics rose impetuously against the nobles and gentles of the kingdom, pronouncing, however, the innocence of the said lord the king, then under age, his case therefore excusable. He declares the faults to be more evidently from other sources, by which, and not by chance, such strange things happen among men. And the title of this volume, the order of which contains seven sections, is called 'Vox Clamantis,' the 'Voice of one Crying.'" "Vox Clamantis."

The later description of this book, varied probably by the hand of a different transcriber, says that it treats

"Of the various misfortunes happening in England in the time of King Richard the Second, whereby not only the nobles and commons of the kingdom suffered torments; but also the most cruel king himself, through his demerits falling in ruins from on high, is cast finally into the pitfall that he made. And the name of this volume is entitled 'Vox Clamantis.'"

The first of these descriptions is in a faint way true to the

substance of the book. The second, written after the accession of Henry IV., expresses an opinion based on the course of events after the date of the "Vox Clamantis." Of Gower's third book the descriptions are :—

"Confessio Amantis."

"That third book in the English language, divided into eight parts, which, at the instance of the most serene prince the said Lord Richard the Second, King of England, is composed [that third book which for reverence of his most vigorous Lord Henry of Lancaster, then Earl of Derby, is composed in English] according to the prophecy of Daniel on the mutation of the kingdoms of this world, distinguishes the times from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar until now. It treats also according to [Nectanabus and] Aristotle upon those things in which King Alexander, as well in the regulation of himself as otherwise, was thoroughly instructed by his teaching. But in the principal matter of this work it has its foundation upon love, and the infatuate passion of lovers; and the appropriate name specially allotted to it is 'Confessio Amantis:' the 'Confession of a Lover.'"

So runs the later description; the earlier had said that it treats of things in which, by Nectanabus and Aristotle, King Alexander,

"as well in the regulation of himself as otherwise, had for foundation love and the conditions of lovers, where are inserted more distinctly for example the end of various chronicles and histories, and also the writings of poets and philosophers. And the name of the present work is specially called 'Confessio Amantis.'"

Of the French poem no MS. is known to be extant;* the Latin poem is Gower's best work; and the English, that for which he is most generally known.

The "Vox Clamantis," really the voice of one crying in the social wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord,"

* What Thomas Warton, in his "History of English Poetry," mistook for the "Speculum Meditantis" is a book enforcing by examples from mythology and history fidelity in married lovers.

was written immediately after the insurrection of the Commons under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw in 1381. Treating that event as sign of disease in the body politic, it sought for the causes of disease through the whole framework of society. Far wider in the scope of its complaint against corruptions of society than Richard de Bury's "Philobiblon," the "Vox Clamantis" is supported by that work, as well as by the "Vision of Piers Plowman," in giving a lively picture of the condition of society in Chaucer's time. And the truths told in such works are the best preparation for right reading of the "Canterbury Tales."

Period of the "Vox Clamantis."

Edward III. had battled with the French, Laurence Minot singing of Crécy and of other triumphs—as over Calais reduced to famine by siege of a plague-smitten army —but dying or ceasing to sing four years before the battle of Poitiers. The French wars, in compelling the king to call his Parliament together at least once a year, and get supplies by granting or promising reforms, had indirectly served to advance the liberties of England. In 1362 Parliament had been first opened by a speech in English. In 1376 a parliament (called "the good") had questioned the faithfulness of ministers who required of the people such "infinite treasure," and had expelled and imprisoned some of the adherents of the unpopular John of Gaunt (Ghent), Duke of Lancaster, who was the king's chief minister. It had rebuked also the king's favourite, Alice Perrers. But in June of that year the death of the Black Prince had deprived England of a popular heir to the throne, and the king's grandson, the Black Prince's second son, Richard of Bordeaux, his elder brother being dead, had then become next heir. The Duke of Lancaster, as next heir male, had vainly proposed that the succession should be limited to heirs male of the king; but on the dissolution of that Parliament, John of Gaunt, recovering

power, had imprisoned its late Speaker, and prosecuted the Chancellor, William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. It was just then that John of Gaunt escorted to St. Paul's John Wyclif, arraigned as a heretic, and in the eyes of the people confounded the cause of the reformer with his own. At last, after a reign of fifty years, Edward III. had died at Shene, where he was lodged with Alice Perrers, and in the year 1377 the old king's grandson Richard, a boy only eleven years old, loved of the people for his father's sake, had become King Richard II.

The child-king was furnished with a Council of Regency for the administration of affairs—the Council consisting of the Chancellor and Treasurer, two bishops, two earls, two barons, two bannerets, and four knights. The boy came to a troubled throne at a time of domestic suffering, when also French and Spaniards so harassed the English coasts that they destroyed the town of Rye, burned Hastings, Poole, Portsmouth, and other places, ravaged the Isle of Wight, and intercepted trading vessels. The king's first Parliament, called to obtain supplies, was mainly the "good Parliament" again, with the same Speaker whom John of Gaunt had imprisoned. But Lancaster warmly represented to it the needs of the country, and it voted liberal supplies, which it placed in charge of two merchants of London, who were appointed treasurers. By aid of these supplies John of Gaunt took on bootless errand a fine army to Brittany, and brought it back after he had failed to take St. Malo. The Scots then broke truce, and also became active enemies. The Government, having spent its supplies, was £160,000 in debt, and Parliament resolved to raise two-thirds of that amount by a poll-tax of three groats upon each person above fifteen years of age. It was the second poll-tax within five years, and the physical distresses of the half-enslaved people were such that within not many months they were about to be devastated by another year of plague

But they still kept their discontent within bounds till Government, dissatisfied with the returns, farmed the tax to some speculators. The collectors then became more insolent, and in May, 1381, in Gower's own county of Kent, and in Essex, where also he had property, the rising began. The people of Fobbing, on the Essex side of the Thames, who were the first to rise, killed the assessors and taxing-clerks, and paraded their heads upon poles. Immediately afterwards there was uproar in Kent. In Dartford an insolent collector was brained by Wat Tyler with his lathing-staff, and the people rose. Rochester Castle was besieged, to free from it a burgher of Gravesend who had been claimed as a serf. Every man known to be a lawyer, courtier, or retainer of the Duke of Lancaster was killed, and a disorderly multitude of a hundred thousand men, swarming after and towards their Kentish leader Wat Tyler, the excommunicated priest John Ball, and Jack Straw (the priest of the Essex men) threatened London from Blackheath, demanding that all should be free, that land should never be rented at more than fourpence an acre (then a fair average rent), liberty of buying and selling in all places, and a general pardon. The kindly practice of emancipation had increased the number of poor freemen, who could thrive a little by trading, could assert their independence as hired servants, or even buy land among the shoeless rustics, to whose class they had belonged. But from those who were yet servile bondsmen unpaid labour was demanded in the tillage of their lords' lands, the reaping, housing, thrashing of his corn, and cutting of his wood for fuel. Ignorant and hungry, but yet a mob of Englishmen, the suffering crowd rose, and in the excess of riot most of them asked no more than their personal liberty and right of unimpeded trade, adding only an error of political economy touching the price of land which has in some form been shared with them even by educated

statesmen of a later day. In Southwark, on the night of the 12th of June, they destroyed the Marshalsea, and sacked the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace; next morning they poured over London Bridge, destroyed Newgate, sacked the stronghold of the lawyers in the Temple, and laid waste the Duke of Lancaster's rich palace of the Savoy; wasters, not robbers, they burnt alive in it one who was found taking to himself some of its gold and silver. The king and the chief nobles had during this time of irrepressible riot fled for refuge to the Tower. On the 14th of June the king met the insurgents at Mile End, and acceded to their demands; the great body of them then retired, but there remained Wat Tyler, with a rabble that broke into the Tower, where they murdered, besides other lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was this rabble that the king met on the 17th in Smithfield, when, upon Tyler's touching his dagger, and laying a hand on the king's bridle, Walworth, the mayor, stabbed him. Then, according to the well-known story of that day, his followers bent their bows, crying, "They have killed our captain, slay them all;" but the boy-king, then only fifteen years old, fearlessly galloped up to them, saying, "What are you about, my friends? Tyler was a traitor; I am your king; I will be your captain;" and, putting himself at their head, led them across the fields to Islington. There a force came to his support, by which he was enabled to compel submission; but at the intercession of Sir Robert Knolles, who had brought the soldiery, the king suffered the mob to disperse without attacking them. Richard afterwards revoked the concessions that had been extorted from him, and the insurrection was avenged, and what remained of it was put down with unsparing cruelty; upon which followed immediately the third of the great plague-years of that century. To the credit of the king or his counsellors, it should be remembered that he did advise the next Parliament

to abolish bondage, but the ruling class refused consent to the proposal.

When, in the May of 1381, John Gower, Esquire, aged about fifty-four, a wealthy gentleman of Otford in Kent, who had property in Essex, found himself living in the very heart of this wild insurrection, all his sympathies were with the ruling class that it attacked. But senseless as the uproar seemed to him, he believed it to be really a sign of social evils that were ruining the State. In his

"*Vox Clamantis*,"*

a Latin poem, in seven books, of alternate hexameter and pentameter, the

First Book, which is almost a fourth part of the whole work, begins by telling of a day in the fourth year of Richard II.'s reign—a day in June, when smiling Nature was most lavish of her gifts. Then dews refreshed the earth, fields yielded their pasture to the cattle, earth was bright with the many tints of flowers yielding their delights and uses up to man, while the cuckoo, the dove, and the lark, and the nightingale, and the thousand thousand birds blended their music with the ripple of the life-giving waters and the odour of the flowers. He gave his heart up to enjoyment of God's world, then throbbing with light and warmth, until the bright day closed.

Sorrow comes often after gladness, sickness after health. In the silence of the night he lay sleepless, struck with sudden fear, possessed by care, seeing the past, and shrinking from the future. Then—it was on a Tuesday, when the night was nearly spent, and the morning star heralded dawn—there came sleep with a dream, in which he thought that, as he went to gather flowers in the fields, he saw innumerable monsters. Scattered crowds of the common people, roaming about the fields, were suddenly struck with the curse of God and changed into wild beasts, changing the reason of men for brutish unreason. Asses, disdaining the curb, rose like wild lions to seek their prey; and, leaping about the fields, terrified all the citizens with their

* "Poema quod dicitur Vox Clamantis, necnon Chronica Tripartita, auctore Johanne Gower, nunc primum edidit H. O. Coxe M.A., impensis Societatis Roxburgensis" (London, 1850).

Hee-aw.* They would no longer carry sacks into the town, nor bend their backs to any burden. They claim to be lodged and combed like the horses. So the ass leapt higher than the leopard, and carried a longer tail than the lion himself. The newness of things put all ancient law to flight. With the senseless asses there came oxen, into whom none dared to thrust the goad, and butting with the horns whereby they were led yesterday to cultivate the fields. They claim to carry their necks free and erect, yoked no longer to the plough. These became monsters—bear-footed, dragon-tailed, and breathing fire out of their mouths. What herdsman will care to guard and protect such cattle? The wide fields lie waste. Ox is a lion; ox is a leopard; ox is a bear: but his old character as ox he has forgotten.

Slumber deepened, and there were dreams. After the oxen I saw a herd of unclean swine possessed by the devil, and none dared put a ring into their noses to prevent them from uprooting, wolfish now, not swinish, by their nature. Among them was one boar [Wat Tyler], whom Kent produced. Earth could not produce his like. With shining eyes, and breathing out flames, from whose burning there is no house far removed; lightning flies from his mouth; at the blast of it a city burns; and he prepares for war with elephantine tusks. Then I saw dogs, as thousands of hounds, who shook the fields with their angry barking; untrained dogs, who take no pleasure in the huntsman's horn, but turn to bark upon the hunters; watch-dog with broken chain, mastiff, sheep-dog—all have broken loose, and, with teeth displayed and tails proudly erect, seek to tear whatever they find sound. Their bite is pestilent. The more they eat, the more insatiate they hunger. When the barking of these dogs reaches the ears of Satan, he and his hell rejoice at the new sound. Cerberus strains at his chain in sympathy, breaks it, and rushes up, full speed, to join and lead the riot.

And as the dream went on, there came with it new monsters. The cats turned wild and came abroad—these figuring the domestic servants broken loose; and foxes—these the thieves broken from jail. The cock came with the falcon's beak and claws, and his pleasant morning crow is changed into a fearful shrieking. The goose is a kite circling over prey. The owl preys no more by night and in secret, but flies out among the birds of day.

And as the sleep and dream continued, there swarmed every kind of fly and wasp, with bite and sting, and there rose up a new plague

* "Terruit en cunctos sua sternutatio cives
Dum geminant solita voce frequenter Yha!"

of devouring frogs, that scattered poison. Beelzebub, their prince, came to lead the host of the flies. And when all these monsters were gathered together as the sands of the shore [a jay, a bird commonly known as Wat in Gower's time], a jay that had learnt to talk, with stretched wings, claimed to be their leader. Fierce of voice, cruel of face, the very image of death, he fixed their attention, mounted to the top of a tree, and spoke—

"O servile, miserable race, whom the world, by its law, long since subdued to its own uses, behold, now is the day come when rustic strength is to prevail, and good-breeding must go its way. Have done with honour! Perish, law! What virtue has existed before now, let it last no longer in the world! Let an end be made of the law that used to keep us down, and the rest be as our court shall rule!" "So be it!" cried they all, and followed Wat the Jay.

The accursed progeny of Cain came then to join their hosts—Gog and Magog, and the rout of servants of Ulysses, whom Circe changed into unreasoning beasts. Then is it that Wat calls. Tom comes, and Sim delays not. But the next lines Thomas Fuller has translated:—

"As the Philistines," says Fuller,* "came out in three companies to destroy all the swords and smiths in Israel, so this rabble of rebels, making itself tripartite, endeavoured the rooting out of all penknives, and all appearance of learning. One in Kent, under the aforesaid Wat and John" (Wat Tyler and Jack Straw); "the second in Suffolk; the third under John Littstarre, a dyer, in Norfolk. The former of these is described in the Latin verses of John Gower, prince of poets in his time, of whom we will bestow the following translation:—

"'Watte vocat, cui Thomme venit, neque Symme retardat,
Recteque Gibbe simul Hicke venire jubent:
Colle furit, quem Geffe juvat, nocumenta parantes,
Cum quibus ad damnum Wille coire vovet.
Grigge rapit dum Dawe strepit, comes est quibus Hobbe,
Lorkin et in medio non minor esse putat;
Hadde ferit, quos Judde terit, dum Cebbe minatur,
Jacke domosque viros vellit et ense necat.'

* "Church History," bk. iv., A.D. 1380 (vol. ii., pp. 353-4, Brewer's edition). Taking Gower's text, however, from the Roxburghe edition, I have followed it in altering Fuller's Gibb to Jeff in the third line.

"'Tom comes thereat when called by Wat, and Simm as forward we find;
Bet calls as quick to Gibb and to Hykk, that neither would tarry behind.
Jeff, a good whelp of that litter, doth help mad Coll more mischief to do,
And Will he doth vow, the time is come now, he'll join with their company too.
Davie complains, while Grigg gets the gains, and Hobb with them doth partake,
Lorkin aloud, in the midst of the crowd, conceiveth as deep is his stake.
Hadde doth spoil, whom Judde doth foil, and Tebb lends his helping hand,
But Jack, the mad patch, men and houses doth snatch, and kills all at his command.'

Oh! the methodical description of a confusion," Fuller adds. "How doth Wat lead the front, and Jack bring up the rear!"

But in fact Gower brings up the rear, not with Jack Straw, but with John Ball, the excommunicated priest, who preached to the people on the text—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

Fuller broke off four lines before the end of Gower's catalogue of heroes, and his translation should have been completed somewhat thus:—

"Hogg, strutting elate in his glory of state, believeth no king is as great
Or as noble as he, who is now proved to be nobility's natural mate.
Ball was the preacher, the prophet and teacher, inspired by a spirit of hell,
And every fool was advanced in his school, to be taught as the devil thought well."

With lively force Gower's verse tells how in his dream the bestial mob raged, how it was armed, how, instigated by the devil, it attacked on the Thursday festival of Corpus Christi, London, the Troynovant, wasted by them as the Troy of old was wasted. He sees the rabble in the Tower cut the throat of Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canter-

bury—murder that must be avenged, as was that of Thomas à Becket. Rapine and murder were in the city. Men of station and learning fled into the woods and fields, and became wanderers. Terror spread to the neighbouring towns. The poet, dreaming, suffered in his own person the distresses of these outcasts. He went also, with those who fled thither for protection, into the Tower of London, as into a ship running her perilous course through storm by the whirlpool of Scylla. The storm increases in fury—from above it thunders, below them are rent asunder the abysses of the waters, and for those on board the imperilled ship there is no help but in God, who at last stills the storm, the proud Jay being sacrificed by the sword of a Mayor, William, whose mind the honest spirit in his heart stirred to high deeds. Blessed be the Lord that stilled the tempest by that one sufficient holocaust. The dreamer, kneeling with palms folded towards heaven, said, "Glory be to Thee, O Christ!" and in repeating this, recovered from his terror.

But he slept still, and still saw a ship without oars drifting in vain search of safe harbourage. From that ship the dreamer landed on an island where was a great crowd of people, and he asked of them what island that was, and what the crowd of its people. An old man answered him, with horrid voice, "This once was called the Island of exiled Brut, which merciful Diana gave to him; for here that people dwells whose dissonant rites are most remote from Love. Because this race was formed of various races, various are its errors; here, indeed, are noble forms, but tempers as of the wild wolf; they fear no laws, trample with force upon the right, and vanquished justice dies under the sword. A pestilent mob spreads fraud, and crime, and fury; men here have stormier bosoms than the sea. This soil is ever wet with bloody death; the sad, unshapely wormwood clothes our fields, the earth bears for us only bitterness. But the sun's round clips not a worthier race, had but its people love to one another."

Then the dreamer in his grief found he had reached a port as full of doubts and terrors as the sea from which he had escaped. His hope failed again when he saw to what a harbour he was come. He fell to the ground in grief, and when he raised his head there was no ship, no crowd. He was alone in darkness; and a voice from heaven warned him of the vanity of sorrow. If he was in an island of discord, let there be strife without, and peace within his doors, and let him seek the less for worldly occupation. When passions flowed in on him, let him yield to them, and float loose on the tide. A Divine Power works in the affairs of men; there is no sure reliance on the

present hour. Act always timidly, speaking of glad things as if they might be turned to troubles. The silent man is strong. Rest nourishes; excess of labour has its hurt. Nature's wants are moderate; it is the abundance of excess that brings man ever into the mood of want. As the times give you leisure, I admonish you quickly to write what in this dream you have seen and heard; for dreams often contain warnings of the future. With the dreamer's quiet resolve to obey the voice bidding him do this the first of the seven books of the "Vox Clamantis" ends.

The Second Book tells how, being awake, Gower proceeded, according to the counsel of the voice heard in his dream, to write what he had seen and heard of the world. He invokes, he says, no Muses, but will sacrifice to God alone, whose Holy Spirit he invokes, as in the name of Christ he undertakes his labour. If he seem unpolished to his reader, let the reader spare the faults and look to the inner meaning of his work. And again and again he asks that the soul of his book, not its mere form, be looked to. "The eye is blind, and the ear deaf," he says, "that convey nothing down to the heart's depths; and the heart that does not utter what it knows is as a live coal hid under ashes. If I know little, there may be another whom that little will help. Poor, I give of my scanty store; for I would rather be of small use than of none. But to the man who believes in God no power is unattainable if he but rightly feels his work; he ever has enough whom God increases. A little light may shine through a great darkness; the water of a rivulet is sweet. What follows, I say not of myself, but as an instructed messenger. From many a different flower have I filled my honeycomb; there are shells here from many a shore. Many an example from the ancient doctors fortifies my verse, and the 'Voice of one Crying' ('Vox Clamantis') shall be the name of this volume, because there are written in it the words that come of a fresh grief":—

> "'Vox Clamantis' erit nomenque voluminis hujus
> Quod sibi scripta novi verba doloris habet."

The work now becomes a didactic argument on the condition of society in Gower's time, prompted by the significant outbreak described in the first book. The second book teaches that the affairs of men go ill or well, not by Fortune, upon whom everyone lays the blame, but according to the manner in which they fulfil their duties before God. Having shown this from Scripture, Gower sings of faith in the triune God, and in Christ Jesus, His incarnate Son—sings of God, whose glory and power are beyond man's comprehension, and whose love demands

man's love, though none can ever love Him worthily. God only can bless the Church. Man bows to images of wood, being himself God's nobler image. "The world was made to be man's servant, not his god. The sculptor is greater than his carving. We have carvings as memorials, for we believe in God, and not in gods. If images are made and adorned in order that gifts for them may be got from the people, I know not the merit of that workmanship. We reverence the sign of the Cross in honour of Jesus, who through it has made us free. His is its mighty power. God the Creator governs all; the Maker's hand is shown in all His work. As we do, so we rejoice or suffer. There is no misfortune, no good luck for men. Whatever happens among us, for good or ill, comes with our own doing—"nos sumus in causâ."

Thus, having shown (in his first book) the terrible condition of his country in his time, Gower takes it to heart, arguing (in his second book) that misfortune is a heathenish word, that God, not Fortune, rules, and lives of men and nations are shaped by their conduct under His wise governance. Then he proposes, in his

Third Book, to consider what the conduct of men is in his own day; what they must cure who would cure the distresses of the land; and prays again God's pardon and aid for his weakness. "I do not," he says, "affect to touch the stars, or write the wonders of the poles; but rather, with the common human voice that is lamenting in this land, I write the ills I see. God knows, my wish is to be useful; that is the prayer that directs my labour. No hatred urges me. In the Voice of my Crying there will be nothing doubtful, for every man's knowledge will be its best interpreter." He prays that his verse may not be turgid, that there may be in it no word of untruth, that each word may answer to the thing it speaks of pleasantly and fitly, that he may flatter in it no one, and seek in it no praise above the praise of God. "Give me, that there shall be less vice and more virtue for my speaking." Such is the true-hearted prologue to the third book, in which John Gower begins his study of the life of his own time.

He then divides society into three classes, represented by clerk, soldier, and ploughman, and speaks of the clergy first, giving two books (the third and fourth) to the discussion of their state. Beginning with the prelates, his first topic is the schism in the Papacy—one Pope schismatic, and the other sound. France, he says, follows the schismatic (Clement), but England holds everywhere to the right faith. Otherwise, among prelates who follow Christ, there is no guiding rule. Christ was poor, they heap together wealth. Christ gave on earth peace, they only stir up wars. Christ gave freely, they are as locked boxes. He lived to labour, but they take their ease. Christ was

gentle, they are impetuous. He walked in humility, they walk in pride. Christ was full of pity, they wreak vengeance. Christ was chaste, they seldom live modest lives. He was a good shepherd, but they devour the sheep. They, with full stomach, praise the Fasting of the Lord. We seek and worship wealth. The poor man shall be a fool, though he speak with the lips of Cato; and Dives shall be a wise man, although he know nothing. There is no poor wise man. If the poor man be wise, he is a poor man and nothing else. To this mind the prelates conform themselves more than to the mind of Christ. Some, living delicately, pamper to excess their fleshly appetites; others desire the episcopacy for the sake of worldly gain, as servants of God for the love of mammon, and, rich in temporal goods, have laid up no treasure in heaven. The mere shadow of Peter healed the sick; but our light, our voice, our prayer, wants power to be helpful. Christ gave and left His peace to His Disciples. Yet against His positive laws, the prelates make war upon Christians for worldly gain, when they should, with piety and patience, love God and their neighbour, and, instead of stirring war, labour to subdue, with God's help obtained by prayer and gentleness, the malice of the world.

As the temporal chiefs of the world may not assert rule in spiritual matters, so neither should the spiritual chiefs take leading part in the dissensions worldly pride and avarice produce. It does not befit the Pope to wear the arms of Cæsar. Gold pours ever down the throat of the Church, and not one little drop comes back. O Head of the Church, recall the times of Christ, and see whether there be in them any example like that which you follow. A clergy withdrawn from the law of piety has made that the tail of the Church which used to be its head. Its health is its disease; its life, its death; its lifting up, its fall; its law, its error; and its own Father, its enemy.*

Why do the prelates preach peace, and promote dissension? We call the heathen to our peace that they may escape suffering upon our cross, and levy war on Christians who barely speak of their own rights. Peter cut off an ear which Christ, by stretching forth His hand, made whole again; we cut off a head which there is no power to put on again, and so our sword of the Church is stronger than the sword of Peter. The Church seizes to itself the goods of its neighbour, and then calls them sanctified, wherefore no neighbour may seize goods of

* "Proh dolor! a clero, pietatis jure remoto,
Cauda fit ecclesiæ qui solet esse caput,
Fitque salus morbus, fit vitaque mors, relevamen
Lapsus, lex error, hostis et ipse pater."—Lib. iii., cap. 9.

the Church. So the pastor does not lead his sheep to pasture, but himself pastures upon them, like another wolf, and construes his Gospel of St. Mark, *Marcam pro Marco.**

Gower, like Walter Map and other mediæval Latin poets, often slips thus into a round of puns.

The simony of the prelates brings into the sheepfold robbers who have not come in by the gate. Christ bade His followers turn the other cheek to the smiter; but let any man offend the prelates, and they curse death upon his soul. Calling themselves the Church, to themselves they permit all things; they will bear no weight on their shoulders, while they hang the burden of their law on other necks. They will sit with the blessed at the right hand of Christ, but they will not drink of His cup. But the good prelate should, by his own deeds, be as light to the blind, food to the fasting, extreme unction to the sick. Rome bites the hand that does not bring a gift. From the court of Rome Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John would get no answer to any of their asking if they took no gift with them. I know not whether Antichrist be come, but here are signs of him. The Pharisees sit in the seat of Moses, the Scribes dogmatise, the shepherds care only for plunder, and the sheep wander astray. Give us, O God, prelates who will lead the people in right ways; for if our clergy be good, we also shall be better than we are.

Of the rectors, too, who are appointed under the prelates to the care of parishes, some leave the care of their parishes to serve a magnate at the court; others take licence from their bishops to attend the schools of divinity, that, in the name of a virtue, they may gratify their lusts; others live in their parishes, but neglect duty for hare, and fox, and hunting. They feed dogs, not men; and when they speak of God, think of a hare. There the fox hunts for the fox, like following like; and the fair women of his parish are to this rector as to the fox the hen, or as to the wolf the sheep. A fourth sort of rector, again, is he who lives in his parish and buys and sells from day to day, that he may amass the riches of this world. Harder than iron, he is conquered by soft woman's flesh, and so one hand scatters what the other gains.

There are the stipendiary priests also without cures, who have taken

"Sic libras sitiens libros non appetit, immo
Marcam pro Marco construit ipse libro:
Summas non summa memoratur, et optima vina
Plusquam divina computat esse sacra:
Virtutis morem non sed mulieris amorem
Quærit, et hoc solo tentat arare solo."

orders that they may trade on the calling. They go, money in hand, on traffic of simony to Rome, and come back, prosperous, to their church, their women, and their wine. He who would have at home a clean wife and clean chambers, let him keep out of his house the priest and the pigeon.*

Of what worth are the undevout prayers of libidinous and drunken priests? God knows whether the prayers are lost that are entrusted to them. I know only that he who has given bread to the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, will have merits debited to him for his goodness. The clergyman says that, though he be full of offence, it is not for the layman to impute crime to him. He will accuse the laity, but will not be accused by them; he claims to go unbridled. But a lawless clergy makes a lawless people that knows nothing of clergy and right. He who defies the law forfeits what honour it concedes to him. Again, the priest says that he is not more sensual than laymen: "I am of like flesh with my neighbour." So he declares himself free as all other men to vice when in the station to which he should have attained by five steps of probation, and which is, of all others, the most sacred. He who is to give an example of virtue and is vicious, that teacher errs more than the taught, in my opinion. The poet then dwells on the mysteries of the sacerdotal order: first, as signified in the garments of the priests —the purity of the white linen, the restriction of the belt, &c.; then as foreshadowed in the sacrifices of the old law, showing that both the old and the new law demand a clean priest. The priest also must be of years of discretion before he can assume his office. The shaven head is a type of the successful struggle with worldliness. The roots of worldliness remain in the flesh, and, cropping up only the stronger for the razor, struggle to efface the pattern of a spiritual cleanliness. The priest is never shaved so clean that he has conquered for good, and can cease to combat with, the tendencies of the flesh. By his shaven head, therefore, he is admonished that he must maintain a daily struggle for his purity of life. The good priest sustains his people in well-doing, but the bad priest multiplies for his brother the occasions of offending.

From the secular priests the voice of the poet's Crying turns against the error of the schools which feed the roots of the Church, and says that youths are drawn into the priestly order chiefly by these motives: escape from the whip of common law, escape from toil, and certainty of being clothed and victualled. There is a better motive than all these,

* "Longius a camera sit presbyter atque columba,
Stercora fundit ea, fundit et ipse stupra."

the school's delight in a good pupil; but that belonged to ancient days rather than to ours. And so it is now, that a clergy blind and immoral causes us laity to stray hither and thither without light. To that conclusion is the third book brought.

The Fourth Book of the "Vox Clamantis" cries out upon the cloistered clergy. Sacred as are the orders of the monks, they are desecrated by greed and gluttony: men vowed to poverty grasp wealth; vowed to abstinence, they pamper their bodies. They are silent at meals, that talking may not impede the work of their teeth; they drink sitting, that their legs may not fail under the weight of their bellies; they are shaven, that they may have no lock of hair to fall into their cups; they wear wide flowing robes to veil the largeness of their bellies. Unknown to their superiors, they put to vile use the worldly riches of the Church. Though their founder was Benedict, yet have they not God's benediction. The monks should no more wander abroad out of their cloisters than the fish out of their seas. Fouler than a black carrion crow is the monk who has taken his black habit for worldly gains. Patience and Peace have fled the cloisters, Chastity lies dead in them, Luxury now wastes the houses of the monks, Hypocrisy has taken thither Falsehood for his mistress, and my lord Worldliness rules all. As are the excesses of the monks, so are those of the erring canons; but of all men most miserable are the men of ill-life professing cloistered godliness. He who enters a religious order should put off the vices of the world, humbly repent, seek peace, be chaste, drink water, wear rough garments, and sleep little. His mouth should be upon the ground, his mind in heaven; and he should speak plain words from a plain heart. The mind humble, the eye single, the flesh clean, the heart pious, the faith right, the hope firm, so is the way sped.

Weak and inconstant women there are in monastic habit who, under profession of religion, follow the nature of their frailer sex in seeking that which is forbidden.* The ordinary who makes visitation to correct errors among women who have taken the veil, often respects no more the spouses of Christ than he does those of men.

The Cry is next against the Order of Mendicant Friars, who tacitly usurp the wealth and luxury and worldly influence they have professedly forsworn, who preach as hypocrites, and salve in private sins they publicly denounce, coming never thrice to a house from which they take no worldly gain away. I seek not that they should perish, but that they be broken and joined together in the state first settled for them by their

* "Nec schola, nec sensus, constantia, nullaque virtus,
Sicut habent homines, in muliere vigent."—Lib. xiii., cap. 14.

Order. Some affect, in defiance of their vows, to be masters in the schools, and swell with a pomp of theology; or wander abroad, apt as the chameleon to change colour—now physicians, now confessors, now adulterers. To the Church of Christ, these friars, living without rule, are in no way necessary; they are kept but as black crows among white doves. Every good husbandman roots out the thistles from his field; let not herb Pharisee pollute our holy ground. To the common good also these friars, living without rule, are in no way necessary; they do not fight, they do not till the ground, they are not of the clergy, though they do usurp their honour. They feed neither the people's bodies nor their souls. Of what good, then, are they? They are as numerous as acorns on the oak; they neither plough, nor sow, nor reap; yet the world feeds them. What honour is it for a coward to be Hector's son, or for an apostate brother to be of the house of self-denying Francis? But to those of the house who are still justly fulfilling his commands, the due honour remains.

St. Francis received men of discretion into an Order which now scarcely a discreet adult will join. Infants who know nothing are now ensnared into its net, thus by deceit won to be deceivers. Woe unto you that go about the world to make one proselyte; as it was said to the Pharisees, may it be said now to the friars. A man may serve one of three masters—God, the World, or the Apostate Devil. We see that the friar does not obey God's rule. He says that he is not of the world, that he should do a layman's duties to his country. It is the devil's yoke, then, that he wears. He wanders in search of delicacies as a wolf among the sheep, he houses himself at great cost, and lives, eager of body, slow of wit. However the friars differ in their dress, they are of like condition; there remains and increases more and more the sacred order consecrated once on a time by brother Brunellus. All the decretals of Brunellus I will not repeat, but I will cite two of his commands that are to this day laws. The first was that you friars should have and do in the world whatever you liked; be hirelings if you wished to sell yourselves; be adulterers if you desired adultery; and whatsoever flesh a friar might desire, that should be lawful possession of the blessed brother. He further ordained, as a second law, that all hurt of the flesh be far from you, that whatever is of the spirit be accounted vile among your Order, and that the flesh have all its dalliance and delight. Loosen the desires of your hearts, for there shall be none to bind you; take your own ways everywhere, free to go as you will. This worthier Order of Brunellus yet remains to us. Away with Bernard and with Benedict. I have no prior but Brunel. But if ill times come, when the prayers of those who should be spiritual leaders

of the people are but a vain croaking, what shall put a soul into our corrupt body? I have spoken as others speak of the clergy, for the flock is scattered abroad without a shepherd; and, behold, it seeks everywhere the pasture of a new offending.

With this application to his own time of the satire of Nigel Wireker's "Brunellus," Gower ends the fourth book of his "Vox Clamantis;" and in the Fifth Book turns to the soldier and to the pure ideal of his knightly honour, from which neither love of women nor the love of gold should make him swerve. Animal love is not a just guide to honour, but a disease begetting contradiction, which the poet expresses in thirty or forty lines of antithesis. Then he paints a picture of the sort of woman who takes captive the judgment, and argues of the loss of knightly worth in those who are her prisoners. Whether enterprise of arms be prompted by love of woman, or for empty worldly renown, alike in vain is its praise sung if God be not the author of the praise. There is shame in the knight's honour when God knows its praise is undeserved. Yet through a good woman God passed down to earth, and from a good woman all honest things proceed. Out of her honest love come the good works of love. Her lover sits with honour in the gate. She is a good angel. The bad woman is an angel, too, but of the angels by whom men are tempted to their ruin.

After dwelling on this theme, Gower sings the praise of the true soldier to whom other ranks of society owe common security, and then shows what hurt can come of an unsound soldiery, rapacious and luxurious, spoiling the poor. Let the knight hold honour more precious than gold, pay God his vows, and in God's name he shall prevail. But now, alas! I see that honour is of less esteem than gold, the world and its flesh are preferred to God. In number the soldiery increase, in service decrease, and their honour becomes empty when their duty is left unperformed.

Then he speaks of the serf, dull in ignorance and vice, who tills the earth; and of the hired servants who can scarcely be held for a month to their engagements. They disdain to eat common food, find salt meat hurtful, quarrel with the cooking, grumble when there is no roast, say they are none the better for their beer or peas, and will not come again if you do not set a better dinner before them to-morrow. The poor son of poverty creates himself a lord out of his own stomach, and obeys none other. Loving no man, and not knowing that there is a God, if justice were not armed with terrors he would soon trample, like a beast, over his master.

But the fruits of the earth that such men till vary in divers lands: and what of the merchants who transfer the produce of one region to

those who desire it in another? The two daughters of Avarice (Usury and Fraud), born in the city, receive secret homage there. Young Fraud at his shop-door cries different wares, whatever you wish to have. He calls as many names of things as there are stars in heaven. Those whom he cannot talk in, he drags in. "Here," he says, "is what you are looking for—see, come!" So the clamorous apprentice fetches the people into the den of cheating when the master is at hand. For when Old Fraud compounds his lying tale, none can escape uncircumvented. If the wise man enter, Fraud is wiser than he; and the fool who goes in, comes out the more fool he. Fraud charges this or that a double price, saying, "Thus it came from Paris or from Flanders." What is wanting in the thing is made up with words upon oath, and God Himself is wounded for a penny. But we see full houses where the house has in it nothing of its own. So by hypocrisy the citizen wins from the people honour of the bended knee. But when each comes to his own, the crow, plucked of his stolen feathers, will fly naked. Fraud comes also into the country for wool, mixes wines, sells cloth by a dim light, when touch must make good the defect of sight; and takes often to itself, by unjust weights, a sixth part of that which it should put into the scales. The goldsmith withholds part of your gold, sells under false name glass jewels precious to the eye. If you want a coat made, Fraud cuts a piece for himself out of the cloth. Among the citizens, too, is the evil tongue of scandal-breeding, strife, and schism.

Fire and water, when they have mystery, are pitiless; more pitiless is the untaught crowd. Wash away past perjuries and perfidy; with love and truth, the fortune we despair of may return. The empire passed from Rome when her people ceased to be united. Athens was glorious only while there was unanimity among her citizens. But, with God's help, may their decay be far from our long illustrious city.

The Sixth Book laments the misconduct of the lawyers. Gower distinguishes between law as the rule of justice, and law as made a source of profit by its ministers, a snare for the ignorant. He tells of the large estates made by the pleaders and advocates who prey upon their neighbours, but whose wealth, robbed of the world by worldly cunning, the world gets to itself again, for their estates seldom descend to the third heir. The more numerous the lawyers are, the more they hunger and seek to entangle timid prey within the meshes of their subtleties, showing a colour of the law. They aspire to become judges, and are judges influenced by gifts, by friendship, and by fear; blind to the judgment of God, whose equal law should be their study, and by whom, when all that is dear to them in the flesh has passed away, they shall themselves stand to receive judgment. Complaint is next made

that the sheriffs, bailiffs, and jurors receive bribes, and deny justice to the poor. An unlearned boy-king is negligent of the moral deeds by which the man grows out of the boy. A youthful assembly follows him as their leader, with such counsels as he wills to have. Elder men humour him for their greed, and the king's court contains all that is vicious. Error encompasses the boy on every side. The mother does not know the fate of her child, but time reveals. So the people are complaining everywhere, in doubt because of the gravity of the evil; and I, lamenting with them, write to the boy-king thus. In direct address the "good young king" Richard is then admonished to learn to rule himself, to avoid dishonest ministers, and company of unjust men, and be deaf to counsellors of war and plunder, and to those who would have taxes from his people, and to shun the avaricious man as death. Let him lift up the laws of the Church, be just and merciful in judgment, so use his royal liberty as not to become a slave to vice, be humble, trustworthy of spoken as of written word, avoid sudden anger, lust, avarice; be charitable to the poor, liberal of his goods, but careful to whom he gives. Be free also, O king, from the sin of gluttony, drive out the inertness and oppose the promptings of the flesh, and lay strong hold on the good way. O tender of years, in whom is no guile, simple nobility, beware of the darts of perfidy. For your age does not give you capacity for guile, and your race will not be degenerate in you. You have beauty, race, honour, rank, and power; your birth gives you these gifts; may praise, virtue, grace of manners, follow you; and, pious king, so, as a full man, live in God. Above all things, he is to avoid lust of the flesh, living ever faithful to his queen. The poet sets before him, as a king, the noble example of his father. Avoiding war without just cause, kind rather than austere, seeking wisdom, subject to God, who alone is to be feared, let him live in love of God and of his neighbour, ready for death, great in the eyes of his subjects, as he is found humble in the eyes of God. The long letter to the king is then followed by reflections on the strife and divisions of the world and of the kingdom, with which this sixth book of the "Vox Clamantis" ends.

The Seventh and last Book opens with an application of Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the state of society—man's hard avarice being the iron in the feet of the image, and his lusts the clay. It expresses open discontent at the king's administration, and the enrichment of individuals by taxes levied in the name of war; and it argues that the world is a good world to those who make right and thankful use of the delights that God has given. Man being the microcosm, the world around him will be good or bad as he is himself good or bad. With

his body, that must perish, the corruptible things of this earth also rot away—its pride and its envy, its wrath, avarice, sloth, gluttony, and luxury. Other reminders of the perishableness of this world then follow, with practical contrast between the deaths of the righteous and of the wicked. Each should turn, therefore, to right-doing, and implore God's pardon for what is left undone; but few quit life's pleasures for the love of heaven or the fear of hell. Famine, plague, earthquake, signs from heaven, war, kingdom against kingdom, its sin has already brought upon the world—where prelates, curates, priests, scholars, monks, friars, soldiers, merchants, lawyers, are degenerate from their old state of piety and heavenward knowledge—chastity, thankfulness, simple honesty, and justice that could not be influenced or bought. Gower declares then his especial love for the land of his birth, in which he was educated and has always dwelt, and prays that God will give it peace and honest purity of life. He repeats that what he has written is not his own complaint, but the voice of the people revealed to him in his dream. It touches only the guilty; and may each correct his own fault where he finds it. Here is the voice of the people; but often where the people cries, is God.

In his old age, after the accession of King Henry IV., Gower added to this poem a supplement under the name of

The "Tripartite Chronicle."—Part I.

Here ends the book which is called "Vox Clamantis," founded chiefly upon the subject of the first misfortune that happened, as you have heard, in England—notably as by the rod of God—to the unfortunate Richard II. at the beginning of his reign. And now farther, because he, not thereby repentant, but hardened more and more into the manner of a tyrant, did not desist from incessant scourging of his kingdom with assiduous oppressions, the flail of Divine vengeance proceeded not undeservedly to the extremity of his deposition. For then three nobles of the kingdom specially moved upon this—namely, Thomas Duke of Gloucester, who is commonly called the Swan; Richard Earl of Arundel, who is called the Horse; and Thomas Earl of Warwick, who is called the Bear—these unanimously, with other nobles, their adherents, that they might wipe out the favourers of royal malice, to the praise of God and well-being of the kingdom, made with strong hand and just mind manful insurrection, as in this following Chronicle, which is "Tripartite," the writer intends more manifestly to declare.

Of the "Tripartite Chronicle," written in leonine hexameter, the First Part is said in a few opening verses to tell human work; the second, hellish work; the third, a work in Christ. The first part then opens with the year 1387 [six years after the Wat Tyler insurrection, when the king was twenty-one years old, and lived so wastefully that he is said to have had an establishment of ten thousand persons, three hundred of them in his kitchen]. In that year there were fourteen lords appointed to administer the country; but the king, not fearing the rod of God, turned from their counsels to those of his young and foolish comrades. [These fourteen lords were the Commission of Regency which the Commons had forced on the king, and endowed for one year, from Nov. 19, 1386, with power that it should be treason to oppose.] The king's malice was especially urged against three nobles—the Swan, the Bear, and the Horse. He got venal lawyers to proceed against them; but in vain asked help of the citizens of London. He sent the Boar (the Earl of Oxford), with troops and a royal flag, to the neighbourhood of Chester, but being met by the Swan (the Duke of Gloucester), on a certain Friday, the Boar was defeated so completely that, changed into a hare, he fled beyond the sea. So also did the Archbishop of York, the King's Chancellor, Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk; and the Bishop of Chichester, the King's Confessor. The three chiefs then marching to London, where the king was in the Tower, and having taken possession of the Tower, obtained from the king a Parliament for the cleansing and repair of the kingdom. The Parliament declared that the chiefs who had fled into exile were perpetually banished, and proceeded gradually against the king's evil advisers, of whom, as the chief, the king's Chamberlain, Sir Simon Burleigh, was beheaded; also Beauchamp, his Seneschal, whom he had created Baron Bridgnorth; Nicholas Brember, Lord Mayor of London; and Robert Tresilian, Judge of the King's Bench, were hanged; the other judges who had abetted the king in his evil courses were banished to Ireland. False priests and flattering confessors were dispersed; the three lords resisted every temptation of their justice, whether by prayers or by gifts. Honour, therefore, to the Swan, the Horse, and the Bear, who, as examples of well-doing, support the kingdom and bear others' burdens.

This is Gower's narrative of the events of November, when the year of Commission had almost elapsed; and on the 10th the king entered London, encouraged by his flatterers to proceed in enmity against those who had pro-

posed or supported the Commission; on the 11th the Swan and the Horse (which are the Duke of Gloucester and Earl of Arundel), together with the Earl of Nottingham (the three men respectively Constable, Admiral, and Marshal of England), were known to be marching upon London at the head of forty thousand men; and on the 12th those strong protesters were joined by John of Gaunt's son, the Earl of Derby, and Warwick the Bear.

The story of Gower's Second Part is that of Richard's *coup d'état*. Our language of free men has not a word of its own for that act of overruling violence which makes for a short time a single despot master of a people. In 1389 the king, being in his twenty-second year, declared himself old enough to manage his own affairs, and was left free to do so. During the next eight years, in wholesome awe of his uncles and of his people, he ruled with sufficient moderation, gradually lapsing into visible impatience of restraint; and there was, during this time, no violent domestic strife. It was in or before this time of forced moderation that Gower was writing his "Confessio Amantis," in accordance with the king's request, made at a chance meeting. Gower then, like other patriots, was loyally paying him the honour due to his apparent good intentions, and (considering his youth and noble birth, as son of the Black Prince) due also to the possible ripening of character, now that he had bought much hard experience from the follies of his earlier career. It was in the middle of this eight-year interval, or later, that John Gower, despairing of his king, and unwilling to despair of his country, erased from the completed English poem its tributes of homage to Richard, and dedicated it to Henry Earl of Derby. Thenceforth he neither had nor expressed hope of Richard; and after the *coup d'état* of 1397, English John Gower detested him as the public enemy—openly, utterly, and with the most sufficient reason.

When about to ally himself with France in 1396 by marriage with an eight-year-old French princess, Froissart tells that King Richard spoke to the Count of St. Pol, the French king's representative, of his uncles, among whom Gloucester was adverse to the French match. He said that if he stirred the people to rebellion his crown was lost. St. Pol advised dissimulation till the match was made, telling how "that done, he would be of puissance to oppress all his rebels; for he might rely on aid from the French king." "Thus shall I do," said Richard; and thus he did. Having secured the French alliance, Richard invited the Earl of Warwick to dine with him, and, by a treacherous breach of hospitality, arrested him and made him prisoner. The Earl of Arundel was invited to a conference, assured by the king's oath that he should not be injured in person or property. He was seized at the conference, sent to prison in the Isle of Wight, and afterwards beheaded. By treachery as false the Duke of Gloucester was seized, imprisoned, and murdered. At the same time there was obtained from a servile Parliament a statute (of the twenty-first year of Richard II., 1397–8) which was virtually abnegation of the power of the Lords and Commons, and its transfer to a junta of the creatures of the king. It was but a few months before these events that Gower had resigned his Essex rectory, and married a wife into the quiet home of his old age among the clergy of St. Mary Overies. The king's treacheries, that were the shame and trouble of the first month following his marriage, are the subject of the Second Part of John Gower's "Tripartite Chronicle."

Parts II. and III. of the "Tripartite Chronicle."

The Second Part begins with a lament for the deeds of hell to be narrated in it, and proceeds to sing how the three lords, knowing the king to be deceitful, obtained from him letters of peace; and how, more deceitful than the Fox, he beguiled them. The king's secret anger first

burst on the Swan (the Duke of Gloucester), who was seized at Plescy and conveyed to imprisonment at Calais. Then he sought to take the Horse (the Earl of Arundel), and deceived him by perjury, swearing upon the Sacred Book to his brother Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, that he should be free and unharmed if he came to court. He trusted in the promise, and was taken. Nevertheless the Bear (the Earl of Warwick) did not leave London, and he was there made prisoner. At the meeting of Parliament eight appeliants accused the three nobles. But the king durst not, because of the people, produce the Swan (Gloucester) before them, and, knowing him to be alive, feigned therefore that he had died in his bed. Having thus procured judgment against him in the absence of defence, he sent murderers to Calais, by whom he was smothered with a feather-bed. The Horse (the Earl of Arundel) answered boldly for himself that, whatever he had done, was for the king's good, and showed the king's pardon. But he was condemned and beheaded on Tower Hill. The Earl of Warwick, beguiled by the king, with certain promise of pardon, into admissions, was banished to a prison in the Isle of Man, and the king also seized his lands. Seeking other victims the king drew Lord Cobham from a Carthusian monastery, and banished him ; banishing also, and stripping of his goods, Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, the friend and patron to whom Gower afterwards dedicated his "Vox Clamantis." None then dared speak well of the king's victims, and their enemies mocked and reviled them. They would, said they, the Swan had moulted, and the Horse were galled, and the Bear chained. The second or infernal part of the Chronicle ends then with Gower's praise of Gloucester and of Arundel, lately victorious over the French at sea.

The third or heavenly part begins with a joyous strain. Then it shows how Richard lost his crown by undermining the power of the Parliament, and making himself sole authority by help of special Papal Bulls, by the issue of blank charters for the despoiling of the people, and by the banishment of Henry Earl of Derby, son and heir of John of Gaunt. The death of John of Gaunt caused Henry to be invited into England to claim his inheritance, and he was urged thereto by Thomas Arundel of Canterbury, and Thomas, son and heir of Richard Earl of Arundel. Henry, therefore, as the new Duke of Lancaster, landed at Grimsby, where his first act was to kneel in prayer on the English shore. Henry's coming was hailed joyfully throughout the kingdom. King Richard was then wasting time in Ireland. Bristol was taken, and there three of the king's abettors were beheaded. Richard returned from Ireland into Wales, surrendered himself, and in August

entered London with Henry. There he was placed under arrest in the Tower. Banished lords were recalled, a Parliament was summoned for the next Michaelmas. There is a lament of Gower's for the death of Humphrey, son and heir of the Duke of Gloucester, and of the youth's widowed mother. [It was after this that Henry of Lancaster assumed the honoured badge of the Swan, identified with maintenance of public right.] On the first day of the assembling of Parliament Richard resigned his crown, and Henry became king by threefold right of accession, election, and a bloodless conquest. The Chronicle tells of the continuance of the Parliament until after the coronation, and of the confirmation of the laws passed under the influence of Gloucester and his party. Richard was judicially condemned, but he and the other accused were left in peace, till the conspiracy of the Earls of Huntingdon, Kent, Salisbury, and Lord Spencer, defeated by the people of Cirencester, brought them to the scaffold. At this news Richard saddened and wept, and took no longer food enough to support life: of which privation he died. He was buried at Langley, in Herefordshire. Thus having shown how King Henry IV. came to the throne, Gower, speaking of Richard and Henry by their initials, ends the "Tripartite Chronicle" with a vivid contrast between the characters of R. and H., and holds up, as a warning to bad rulers, the end of Richard. "*Qualis erat vita, Chronica stabit ita.*"

The Spirit of the "Vox Clamantis."

These were the thoughts of Gower's age, when the blind poet, still zealous in love for England and the right, had new faith in the future of his country, and pleasantly collected trifles of his youth to entertain a court in which he trusted. There was an interval of sixteen years or more between the writing of the "Vox Clamantis" and the addition of its most natural sequel —the "Tripartite Chronicle." In that earlier work, though written with vigour and ease in Latin (the language of literature which alone then seemed to be lasting), John Gower spoke especially and most essentially the English mind. To this day we hear among our living countrymen, as was to be heard in Gower's time and long before, the voice passing from man to man that, in spite of admixture with the thousand defects incident to human character, sustains the keynote of our literature, and speaks

from the soul of our history the secret of our national success. It is the voice that expresses the persistent instinct of the English mind to find out what is unjust among us and undo it, to find out duty to be done and do it, as God's bidding. We twist religion into many a mistaken form. With thought free and opinions manifold we have run through many a trial of excess and of its answering reaction. But our scrutiny is fearless in the search for truth. Our foremost thinkers dare to face the problems of their day, from which no terrors of authority can turn them back. Truth is the prize of honest questioning. In battle for main principles we have worked on through political and social conflicts in which often, no doubt, unworthy men rising to prominence have misused for a short time dishonest influence. But there has been no real check to the great current of national thought, the stream from which the long line of our English writers, as trees by the fertile river-bank, derive their health and strength. We have seen how persistently that slow and earnest English labour towards God and the right was maintained for six centuries before the time of Chaucer, from the day when Cædmon struck the first note of our strain of English song with the words, "For us it is very right that we praise with our words, love in minds, the Keeper of the Heavens, Glory King of Hosts." It was the old spirit still in Chaucer's time that worked in the "Vision of Piers Plowman," and spoke through the voice of Gower as of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." It needed not in those days that a man should be a Wycliffite to see the griefs of the Church and people, and to trace them to their root in duties unperformed. Gower's name is a native one, possibly Cymric, but derived probably in or near Kent, from the old Saxon word for marsh-country, of which there was much about the Thames mouth, Gyrwa-land. His genius is unmixed Anglo-Saxon;

closely allied to that of the literature before the Conquest, in the simple earnestness of a didactic manner leavened by no bold originality of fancy. In his Latin verse Gower writes easily, and, having his soul in his theme, forcibly. But he tells that which he knows, and invents rarely. His few inventions also—as of the dream of transformed beasts that represent Wat Tyler's rabble, of the ship of the State at sea, of his landing at an island full of turmoil which an old man described to him as Britain—are contrivances wanting in the subtlety and the audacity of true imaginative genius. He does not see as he writes, and so write that all they who read see with him. But in his own old English or Anglo-Saxon way he tries to put his soul into his work. Thus, in the "Vox Clamantis" we have heard him asking that the soul of his book, not its form, be looked to; and speaking the truest English in such sentences as that "the eye is blind and the ear deaf, that convey nothing down to the heart's depth; and the heart that does not utter what it knows is as a live coal under ashes. If I know little, there may be another whom that little will help. Poor, I give of my scanty store; for I would rather be of small use than of none. But to the man who believes in God no power is unattainable if he but rightly feels his work; he ever has enough whom God increases." This is the old spirit of Cædmon and of Bede, in which are laid, while the earth lasts, the strong foundations of our literature. It was the strength of such a temper in him that made Gower strong. "God knows," he says again, "my wish is to be useful; that is the prayer that directs my labour." And while he thus touches the root of his country's philosophy, the form of his prayer that what he has written may be what he would wish it to be is still a thoroughly sound definition of good English writing. His prayer is that there may be no word of untruth, and that "each word may answer to the thing it speaks of, pleasantly and fitly; that he may flatter

in it no one, and seek in it no praise above the praise of God. Give me," he asks, "that there shall be less vice and more virtue for my speaking."

It was the strength of this aspiration shown in the "Vox Clamantis" with, doubtless, the whole matter of his lost book in French, the "Speculum Meditantis," that caused Chaucer in his "Troilus and Cressida"—before Gower's English poem had appeared—to give to his friend the epithet that his countrymen agreed thereafter in fastening upon him, "the moral Gower."

CHAPTER VIII.

GOWER'S "CONFESSIO AMANTIS."

JOHN GOWER'S English poem, the "Confessio Amantis," or "Lover's Confession," abounds in tales connected by a story in the way made popular by the Decameron. But while professing to amuse the idle with discourse of love, it is as earnest as it could be made by a writer hampered with the working of a fashionable piece of intellectual machinery for which, writing also when aged and in ill health, he did not really care. To the best of his power Gower uses the device of this poem as a sort of earthwork, from behind which he sets himself the task of digging and springing a mine under each of the Seven Deadly Sins. There are a prologue and eight books. The Prologue repeats briefly the Cry of the "Vox Clamantis." The Eight Books are, one for each of the seven deadly sins, with one interpolated book, seventh in the series, which rhymes into English a "Tresor" of the physical and political science and philosophy of the time, from the "Secretum Secretorum," that includes an argument, applied covertly to Richard, on the state and duties of a king.

"Confessio Amantis."

Professor John Wesley Hales has argued* that the date of the first version of Gower's "Confessio Amantis" must have been 1383-4. "The yere sixtenthe of King Richard" being only in the second version, he points to the marginal note on this passage, which says "hic in principio libri

* In the *Athenæum* for December 24th, 1881.

declarat qualiter in anno Regis Ricardi secundi sexto decimo Johannes Gower presentem librum composuit et *finaliter* complevit quem. . . . Henrico. . . . cum omni reverentia specialiter destinavit." Prof. Hales argues that Gower had enthusiastic faith in Richard when the first version was written, and this, as Dr. Pauli had reasoned, could only have been before 1386. Prof. Hales finds reference to the insurrection of 1381 in the lines on the king, which praise him—

> "Touching of pité namély,
> For he yet never unpetously
> Ayein the leges of his londe,
> For no defauté which he fonde
> Through cruelté vengeauncé sought."

The praise in the epilogue also of the king who—

> "Hath many a great debate appeased
> To make his legé men ben esed,"

Prof. Hales believes to refer to the negotiations in 1383 for peace with France, and the truce till Michaelmas that was obtained in the beginning of the year 1384. If so the end of 1383 or beginning of 1384 would be the natural time for allusion to such endeavours. Prof. Hales also points out that there is reference in the body of the text to "the newé guise of Beaume," which would suit with a time not much later than January, 1382, when Richard married Anne of Bohemia. These are good suggestions. It may be replied that the marginal note, which was not by Gower, crowds too much into one year. It was possible to refer to events of the year 1382, or 1383–4, in the year 1393, and as Anne of Bohemia did not die until 1394, after having been for twelve years Richard's queen, "the newe guise of Beaume" was still conspicuous in 1393. Nevertheless there is fair ground for believing that the "Confessio Amantis" in its first form was written before 1386.

Confessio Amantis: a Lover's Confession.

The Prologue, since

" Sothe it is
That who that al of wisdom writ,
It dulleth ofte a mannés wit,"

says for the poet—

" I woldé go the middel wey,
And write a boke betwene the twey,
Somewhat of lust, somewhat of lore,
That of the lesse or of the more
Som man may like of what I write;
And that for fewé men endite
In our Englisshe——"

Here is the point of departure for a significant change made, after the lapse of a few years, by Gower himself in the reading of the text. At first* he thus told of the origin and consequent first dedication of the book :—

" And that for fewé men endite
In our Englisshe, I thenké make
A boke for King Richardés sake,
To whom belongeth my legeaunce
With all min hertés obeisaunce.
In Themsé, whan it was flowend,
As I by boté came rowend,
So as fortúne her timé sette
My legé lord perchaunce I mette,
And so befel as I came nigh
Out of my bote, whan he me sigh,†
He bad me come into his barge;
And whan I was with him at large,
Amongés other thingés said
He hath this charge upon me laid,
And bad me do my besinesse,
That to his highé worthynesse
Some newé thing I shuldé boke
That he himself it mighté loke
After the forme of my writing.
And thus upon his commaunding,

* MS. Harl. 3,490.

† Saw. The form always used by Gower.

Min herte is wel the moré glad
To writé so as he me bad."

He the less fears detraction. A gentle heart seeks only to praise that which is to be praised. But though the world is wide and full of iangling, he shall hope to deserve the king's thanks by observing his will. A king is not to be refused ; and

" Though I sikenesse have upon honde,
And longe have had, yet woll I fonde,
So as I madé my beheste,
To make a boke after his heste,
And write in such a manner wise
Which may be wisdom to the wise,
And play to hem that list to play."

So Gower wrote when the king, having declared himself of age, was, for a few years in wholesome fear of his people, ruling with a discretion that made it the duty of good patriots to keep their doubts in abeyance, and hope yet for a good issue to the unsettled youth of the Black Prince's son. Afterwards, when that hope had departed, Gower, still in King Richard's time, expunged the dedication to the king, and offered his poem to the head of the party which then comprised nearly all Englishmen who loved their country, and desired to see abatement of its suffering. Thus stood the dedication in its altered form *:—

" I thenké make
A boké for Englandés sake
The yere sixtenthe of King Richárd ;
What shall befalle here afterward,
God wote
. . . . . .
Thus I, which am a borel † clerke,
Purposé for to write a boke
After the worlde that whilom toke,
Long time in oldé daiës passed ;
But for men sain it is now lassed
In worsé plight than it was tho,

* MSS. Harl. 7,184, 3,869.

† Rustic, lay. From old French, *borel*, "burel, coarse cloth made of the undyed wool of brown sheep, the ordinary dress of the lower orders, as it still is in parts of Savoy and Switzerland."—*Wedgwood's "Dict. of English Etymology."*

I thenké for to touch also
The world which neweth every day,
So as I can, so as I may.
Though I sickenesse have upon honde,
And longe have had, yet wol I fonde,
To write and do my besinesse,
That in some part so as I gesse,
The wisé man may ben advised.
For this Prologue is so assised,
That it to Wisdom all belongeth;
Whan the Prologue is so dispended,
This boke shall afterwards ben ended
Of love

. . . . . .

This boke, upon amendément,
To stonde at his commaundément
With whom min herte is of accorde,
I send unto min owné lorde,
Which of Lancastre is Henry named.
The highé God him hath proclamed
Full of knighthood and allé grace.
So wol I now this werke embrace
With hol truste and with hol beleve,
God graunte I mote it wel acheve."

The Prologue, as the poet says, to wisdom all belongeth. When that is done, the book shall be of love. In the Prologue, therefore, he looks back to past times, when Righteousness and Peace kissed each other, from days when, he says, men see the sore without the salve. In the prevailing strife none wots who has the worse. May God again send love and peace between the lands. The simple patience, humility, and charity of the old steersman of Peter's barge are gone. Now we have vain-glory and simony. "The heven is fer, the worlde is nigh." The church-key has been turned into a sword; the holy prayer into cursing. There are still many "who serve in the Church only for Christ's sake," and these do good; while in the seat of Moses sit the Scribe and Pharisee. With the second Pope at Avignon, "betwen two stolës is the fall." The sloth, excess, and pride that caused the schism—

"Causeth for to bringe
This newé sect of Lollardie,
And also many an heresie,

Among the clerkés in hem selve.
It weré better dike and delve,
And stonde upon the righté feith,
Than knowe al that the Bible saith
And erre as somé clerkés do.
Upon the hond to were a sho,
And set upon the foot a glove
Accordeth nought to the behove,
Of resonable mannés use."

Divers lands dispute over the Papacy, but when God will, the struggle shall wear out; for truth shall stand at last. This clerk saith yea, that other nay, and thus they drivé forth the day; but for the general cause of the Church none cares. And thus the right hath no defence—

"But there I lové, there I holde,
Lo! thus to-broke is Cristés folde;
Wherof the flock withouté guide,
Devouréd is on every side."

The shepherds hurt where they should heal,

"And what sheep that is full of wulle
Upon his backe, they toose* and pulle,
While there is anything to pile.†
Lo! how they feignen chalk for chese!
For though they speke and teché wel,
They don hem self therof no dele; ‡
For if the wolf come in the wey,
Their gostly staf is then awey
Wherof they shulde her§ flock defende,
But if the pouer sheep offende
In any thing, though it be lite,
They ben al redy for to smite.

* Now touse. From First-English *tæsan*, to pluck or gather.

† Fr. *piller*, to rob. To pile, or pill, was used in the sense of fleecing or skinning.

‡ Part. First-English *dæl*, as in "a great deal," *i.e.*, a great part.

§ Her, their, First-English *hire*, represented also First-English *hire*, her, and meant either her or their; *hem*, them.

And thus howe ever that they tale *
The strokés fall upon the smale,
And upon other that bene greate
Hem lacketh herté for to beate."

They preach almsgiving and penance, abstinence and chastity,

"But pleinly for to speke of that,
I not † how thilke body fat,
Which they with deinté metés kepe,
And lein it softé for to slepe;
Whan it hath elles of his wille
With chastité shall stondé stille."

But Gower, as we have seen, is careful not to confound all the clergy in the censure of the bad :—

"The vice of hem that ben ungood,
Is no reproef unto the good.
For every man his owné werkes
Shall beare, and thus as of the clerkes,
The godé men ben to commende;
And all these other god amende!"

Turning, then, from the clergy to the people, and the common clamour in all lands, "how that the worlde is al miswent" (which some ascribe to Fortune, some to the stars), Gower repeats his teaching that no blind Fate governs the affairs of men, but

"That the man is over al
His owné cause of wele and wo.
That we Fortúné clepé so,
Out of the man himself it groweth."

And this leads to a repetition in his English verse of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the interpretation of it. From the time signified by the golden head of the image, they had come down to the time signified by the feet of clay and iron :—

* Blame. From First-English *tælan*, to speak ill of, censure; the noun is *tál*, *tálu*, reproach; not the "tale" that is from *tellan*, meaning to reckon; noun *tal*, a number.

† Know not. First-English *witan*, to know; *nitan*, not to know.

"Of bras, of silver, and of golde,
The worlde is passéd and agone;
And nowe upon his oldé tone,*
It stant of brutal erthe and steel,
The whiche accorden never a dele.†
The apostel writ unto us alle,
And saith, that upon us is falle
Thend of the world, so may we knowe
This ymage is nigh overthrow."

We see on every side general wars among the Christians; and yet the clergy preach that there is no good deed which stands not upon Charity.

"I not‡ how charity may stonde
Where dedly werre is taken on honde."

The whole world about him images the passions and the strife of man. Death comes of the division in his nature "of cold, of hot, of moist, of drie." If he were engendered of one matter, there would be no corruption. His body and soul, too, are so divided that what one loves the other hates. Division brought the Flood upon the world. The sin of them who built the Tower of Babel was punished with division of tongues. Sin is the mother of division.

"In heven is pees and all accorde,
But helle is full of such discorde
That there may be no lové day.
Forthý good is while a man may
Echone to setté pees with other,
And loven as his ouné brother;
So may he winné worldés welthe,
And afterwarde his soulé helthe."

The poet ends his Prologue, that belongs to Wisdom, with a Would God that now were another such as Arion, who tamed the wild beasts with his music, to put away melancholy and set love between the Lords and Commons! There would be use in many a place for his harping, to make peace where now is hate.

"But when the sharpnesse of the spore
The horsé sidé smit too sore,

* Toes. The First-English would be *tán*.
† Not a bit. ‡ Know not.

It greveth ofte. And now no more
As for to speke of this matere,
Which none but only God may stere."

Here ends the Prologue, from the front of Gower's English poem a aint echo of the warning cry he had sent forth in the "Vox Clamantis." The Prologue, that belongs to Wisdom, being thus dispended, comes the theme of Love,

"Which may be wisdom to the wise,
And play to hem that list to play."

But, after all, Love in this poem serves but as the sugar to coat seven pills against the Seven Deadly Sins, and a bolus of instruction in philosophy and the right discipline of kings.

Book I. of the "Confessio Amantis" begins as with a sigh. The poet cannot reach his hand to heaven and set right the balance of the world; henceforth, therefore, he will treat of love whose law is out of rule. Love is unreasonable, and to prove it so, he will tell how Love and he met together. On a day in May he feigns that he went to the woods; not to sing with the birds, for when he had found a sweet green plain in the forest, there he complained, wished, wept, threw himself on the ground, looked up and called for pity upon Cupid and Venus. Then he saw both the King and Queen of Love. Cupid went by him with wrathful averted eyes, but sent through his heart a fiery dart before he passed away. Venus spoke to him, but with no goodly cheer. He told her that he was a man of hers, who had long served in her court, and deserved some weal after long woe. He would, at her bidding, tell her of his sickness, if he could live long enough to do so. If he lived, she said, her will was that he first be shriven by her priest; and she called to Genius, her own clerk (as appointed in the "Roman de la Rose"), to come forth and hear this man's shrift. Then the poet uplifted his head, and saw that priest of hers ready to hear his Confession.

First greeting him with "Benedicite," like a Confessor of the church, Genius bade the Lover plainly tell what had befallen. The Lover fell on his knees, and with devotion and contrition begged of Dominus his holy father Genius, as he was himself disturbed at heart and had his wits greatly astray, that he would oppose, or put before him, the several points of his shrift, that there might be nothing forgotten. He was, in fact, to put, according to the system of the confessional, his searching questions,* and make an exhaustive examination of the Lover's state.

* In the first tale of the "Decameron," there is a Confessor thus taking the sins in turn for a hypocritical rogue, who means to die in the odour of sanctity.

That, said Genius, was the duty assigned to him as the Priest of Love. But as a Priest he must speak not only of Love, but also of other things that touch the cause of Vice. He would forbear nothing of his office, but show each of the vices, that the Lover might consider how far any of them touched the matter of his love. The Confession begins, therefore, in due form, with questions as to the Lover's use of his five senses, especially of sight and hearing.

And now the setting is made ready for the ring of stories wherewith it is the main purpose of the "Confessio Amantis" to follow, in the way prescribed by Gower's own taste in design, the fashion set by the "Decameron." The tales are closely set, connected throughout, sometimes skilfully and sometimes with an obvious strain of ingenuity, by passages of dialogue between the Confessor and the Lover whom he systematically questions. When the dialogue is long, it is encrusted with brief anecdotes or allusions to history and fable. Genius, the Confessor, illustrates every vice that he inquires about with a tale or with tales showing its character; then asks the Lover whether he be guilty of that sort of offence. The Lover replies variously, but always in accordance with the character of a man purely devoted to the love of one fair woman who has not given him a ray of hope.

The story of Actæon, who saw Diana bathing, illustrates (from Book III. of Ovid's "Metamorphoses") offence by the sense of sight. To this is added, also from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (Book IV.), the tale of Perseus and the Gorgons.

Sense of hearing. Fable of the asp that, liable to be charmed by sounds for the winning of the carbuncle it wears on its head, lays its ear flat on the ground to shut out the fatal music. (This fable is to be found in lib. xii., cap. iv., sec. 12 of the "Etymologia" of St. Isidore of Seville, who died A.D. 636.) Story of Ulysses, who stopped the ears of his fellow-voyagers that they might not hear the fatal songs of the Sirens. Gower got the Troy stories (current knowledge in his day) from Guido Colonna's Latin poem afterwards translated by Lydgate, from Joseph of Exeter's poem, founded on the "Troy Book" of Dares Phrygius, from the "Geste de Troie" of Benoit de St. Maure, and other versions.

Having discussed these topics, the Confessor calls his son's attention to the "deadly vices seven." The first of them is—

Pride, which has five ministers—

1. Hypocrisy. In explaining the nature of this to the Lover, Genius speaks Gower's mind upon hypocrites—religious, ecclesiastical, and secular. In love there is the hypocrite who lies in wait to deceive innocent women. Story of the Roman wife, Paulina, whom Duke

Mundus deceived through her piety, by visiting her in the temple of Isis, with connivance of false priests, as the god Anubis. (Josephus, "Antiq.," lib. xviii., cap. iii. Many later stories were of this type. Boccaccio's second novel of the fourth day, in which a Friar, Albert, personates the angel Gabriel, is one of them.) Story of the Trojan Horse.

2. Disobedience. Story of the good knight Florentius, who, having slain Branchus, was condemned to death, unless he could, within a certain time, answer a question put him by the dead man's grandmother; her question being, What do all women most desire? He was returning to his death, when he met a loathly old woman in a forest, who offered to save his life if he would marry her. He agreed, and by her teaching rightly answered, that what women most desire is sovereignty of man's love. This saving his life, he keeps, with loathing, his knightly word, marries the hag secretly, and finds her at night a lovely maid. She bids him choose whether he will have her to be fair by day or by night; he shall not have both. He wills that she be his mistress, and do as she lists. By which act of full trust and obedience he breaks the spell which was to keep her bewitched until she had won the love and sovereignty of a knight surpassing others in good name. Thus by his obedience Florentius won a perfect bride. (Used by Chaucer as the "Wife of Bath's Tale.")

3. Presumption. In which, says the Confessor of the Lover,

> "Full oft he heweth up so highe,
> That chippis fallen in his eye."

Story of the proud knight Capaneus, who, before Thebes, was struck dead with fiery thunder from the sky. (From the "Thebaid" of Statius, where this incident closes the tenth book.) Story of an old king of Hungary, who, riding out on a May day in pleasurable state, leapt from his chariot to kiss, before his lords, the feet and hands of two faded and dry old pilgrims, with beards white "as a bushe which is besnewed." He gave them also of his good. When he returned to his chariot, there was private murmur among the great lords, and the king's brother took on himself to rebuke him for having brought shame on his estate by humbling himself to such poor wretches. The king answered courteously that this fault should be amended, and considered how he should correct his brother. It was a custom in that land, when judgment of death without hope of release was given against any lord, to blow at night before the gate of the condemned man a brazen trumpet, called the Trump of Death. The king ordered the trumpet to be blown

before his brother's gate that night. Thereby he knew that he would surely die, and in great terror next day he and his wife and five children came before the king as humble suppliants, naked but for their smocks and shirts, to beseech pardon. The king, feigning that he knew nothing of it, asked his brother what his trouble was? He had heard, said the suppliant, the Trump of Death. "Ah, fool!" said the king, "of so little faith that, at a trumpet's sound, thou hast gone stripped with wife and children through the town, in doubt of death that stands under the law of man, and that man may withdraw! Can you marvel now that I alighted from my chariot at sight of those in whose great age I saw the image of my own death which God had appointed by a law of nature that cannot be set aside?

> "Forthý, my brother, after this
> I rede, that sithen so it is
> That thou canst drede a man so sore,
> Drede God with all thin herté more.
> For all shall deie and all shall passe,
> As well a leon as an asse,
> As well a beggar as a lorde."

So the king taught his brother, and forgave him all. (This story is from the "Speculum Historiale" of Vincent of Beauvais, or from its original in Damascenus's "Romance of Barlaam and Josaphat." A version of it, omitting the old pilgrims, and with some other changes, is to be found also in the "Gesta Romanorum," Swan's Translation, vol. ii., Tale xliii.) The Confessor adds, from the third book of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," as another illustration of Presumptuous Pride, the story of Narcissus.

4. Boasting. Story of Alboin, first king of the Lombards, who slew Gurmund, made a drinking-cup of his skull, and married his daughter Rosmunda. But upon his boasting one day publicly, when she had drunk not knowing what cup it was, that he had made her drink with her father, out of her slain father's skull, she became his enemy, and gave herself to her maid Gloderide's proud bachelor, Helmegius, the king's butler, to procure the murder of her husband. After the murder, she fled to Ravenna, where the Duke, when he had heard of her crime, poisoned her. (This story is from Part xvii. of the "Pantheon," written in and after A.D. 1186, by Godfrey of Viterbo, chaplain and notary to Frederick I. and Henry IV., who tells it partly in prose and partly in heroic verse.)

5. Vainglory. Common in the lover, who is over-confident, and fresh, and gay.

"And eke he can carollés make
Roundel, balade, and virelay."

Story of Nebuchadnezzar.

The book then ends with a story generally summing up the character of Pride. Alonzo, a young and wise king, jealous of the rival wit of Don Pedro, one of his knights, declared that he would take his goods and his head, unless he could answer, in three weeks, these three questions:—What thing hath least need, and yet men help it most? What is worth most and costs least? What costs most and is worth least, and brings only loss? The knight went home and despaired of answering, but his clever daughter, Petronella, persuaded him to tell her his trouble, and then to entrust to her the responsibility of answering the questions. On the appointed day she went with her father to court, where he staked his life upon her answers. She said, then, that it is the Earth that hath least need, and which men help the most. Man's hand doth what he may to make it rich, although itself hath all it needs. For all that lives shall die and become earth; earth it was, and earth shall be again. That which is worth most and costs least to keep is, said the wise daughter, Humility. That which is worth least and costs most is Pride. For pride, Lucifer lost Heaven, and Adam Paradise. Pride is the head of all sin. The king not only accepted these right answers, but told the maiden that if her father were one of his peers instead of a bachelor, sure as he had a life she then should be his wife. But to her father he gave an earldom with rent and land; whereupon the quick-witted maiden knelt and begged the king to be true to his word, that he would marry her if but her father were his peer; she was an earl's daughter now. The young king, who saw her beauty and her wit, agreed to marry her. So with a general lesson against Pride and in commendation of Humility, the Confessor ends that part of his examination of the Lover's conscience.

Book II. contains the questioning of the Confessor touching Envy, which is the second of the Deadly Sins. The Lover, apart from his lady, envies nobody; but he cannot bear to see another glad with her. Confessor illustrates—

1. The envy of those who grudge others pleasures they cannot themselves attain, by the story of Acis and Galatea and the fatal envy of Polyphemus. (Ov. "Met.," bk. xiii.)

2. The reverse of this—gladness at grief of others—by the story of Jupiter's sending an angel down to look to the complaints of men. The angel overtook two travellers, and when, by discourse, he found that one was covetous, the other envious, he told them, at parting that

he was a heavenly messenger who, in return for their fellowship, would give to one of them whatever gift he chose to ask for, and to his companion the same gift doubled. The covetous man urged his companion to ask first, and be the chooser of the gift; for himself he desired double share of whatever wealth was sought. The envious man, compelled to ask first, although he might have what he would, yet envied his neighbour's double share. He prayed, therefore, that he might have one blind eye, so that his comrade should be made blind altogether. And he laughed at his neighbour's weeping when the prayer was granted. (From the Fables of Avian, where Phœbus is the heavenly messenger whom Jupiter sends down.)

3. Detraction, which is as the shard beetle that neglects the flowers to settle upon filth. Story of the pious Constance, only daughter of the Roman Emperor Tiberius Constantine. She converted people of Barbary and married the Sultan on condition that he should become a Christian. The Sultan's envious mother, having massacred the guests, and her son also, at the marriage feast, sent Constance to sea in a rudderless ship, which was driven to Northumberland, and came to rest under a royal castle upon the banks of the Humber. Elda, his chamberlain, lived there as castellan for the Saxon heathen king Allee. Elda and his wife, Hermegild, took Constance out of the ship, and Hermegild was made by her so good a Christian that she gave sight to a blind man. Elda went to report of Constance to his unmarried king, and, while he was gone, an envious knight, who sought vainly to win the pious lady, cut the throat of Hermegild, and put the bloody knife under the bed of Constance. Elda, returning at night, found his wife murdered in her bed. The false knight accused Constance. Elda doubted. The false knight swore upon a book, at which his eyes fell out of his head, and a voice was heard saying that this was God's judgment on him for slander. He confessed the truth, and died in doing so. But Constance was married to the king, after he had been christened by Bishop Lucius, who came out of Wales from Bangor. While the king was away, warring with the Scots, Constance became the mother of a son, who was baptised Maurice. A messenger was sent with the news, who slept on the road at Knaresborough, where another envious queen-mother, between Constance and her husband, secretly changed the letters carried by the messenger. The changed letters told the king that his wife was a fairy, and his child a misbegotten monster. He wrote, in reply, that nothing should be done till his return. But at Knaresborough the letters were again changed, and the messenger took back false orders to send mother and child adrift again upon the sea. With grief this order was obeyed.

"And tho she toke her childe in honde,
And yaf it souke, and ever amonge
She wept, and otherwhilē songe
To rockē with her childe aslepe."

The ship stayed its course under the wall of a Spanish castle, where the steward, who was a false knight, sought to do her harm, and was miraculously drowned. The wind then sent her on, and blew her ship into the midst of a great navy, where it stopped under the chief vessel of the fleet. In this ship was the commander of the fleet, Salustes, a Roman senator, whose wife, Helen, was Constance's cousin. The pious lady, being discovered in the drifted vessel with her child, told little of her story. She said that her name was Custe.

"For Custe in Saxon is to saine
Constánce upon the word Romaine."

Salustes and his wife cherished in their household the unknown lady and her child. Meanwhile King Allee, having returned home, discovered how he had been deceived, and caused his mother to be burnt before his eyes. Some time afterwards he went on pilgrimage to Pope Pelagius, at Rome, where Constance, still keeping her counsel, caused her son Maurice, the image of herself, to wait upon his father at a feast. So the last discoveries began, and Constance, re-united to her husband, made herself known also to the Emperor, her father, to whose throne Maurice, the most Christian of emperors, succeeded. Chaucer took this story for his "Man of Lawes Tale," which he founded upon Gower. In the "Speculum Historiale" of Vincent of Beauvais is a story of miraculous preservation allied to this, and including the incident of the bloody knife. Among the Cotton MSS.* Mr. Tyrwhitt† first pointed out an old English rhyme, called Emare, with a story closely resembling this, which is said to be—

"on of Brytaynē layes
That was usēd by oldē dayes."

Story of Demetrius and Perseus, sons of Philip of Macedon. The envious Perseus, by false witness to his father, procured his brother's death. Then he rebelled also against his father, until Philip died of sorrow, and false Perseus was king. After some time the Consul, Paulus Æmilius, left Rome to march against him. As Æmilius was

* Caligula A ii., fol. 69.
† Introductory Discourse to the "Canterbury Tales."

leaving; his young daughter came to him weeping, because Perseus was dead. But Perseus was the name of the child's little dog. The soldier took this as an omen of the other dog's death—

> " For as it is an houndés kinde
> To berke upon a man behinde."

In that war Perseus was taken and starved in his prison; he died like a dog. (The treachery of Perseus to his brother is in the " Epitome of Trogus Pompeius," by Justinus, lib. xxxii., cap. ii. The anecdote of the dog in " Valerius Maximus de Dictis et Factis Memorabilibus," lib. i., cap. v., sect. Rom. 3.)

4. Dissimulation is represented by the Lover's Confessor as the next form of envy. The home of dissimulation, he says, is

> " With hem that dwelle among us here,
> Of such as we Lumbardés calle,
> For they ben the sliest of alle,
> So as men sain in toune about,
> To feign and sheué thing without,
> Which is revers to that withinne,
> Whereof that they full ofté winne
> Whan they by reson shuldé lose."

Story of Hercules and Dejanira and the dissimulation of Nessus. (Ovid, " Heroides," Ep. ix.; " Metamorphoses," bk. ix.)

5. Supplantation. Agamemnon's taking of Briseis from Achilles (" Geste of Troy "). Supplanting of Troilus with Cressida by Diomedes. (Chaucer.) Story of Amphitryon's personating Geta with Alcmene. Story of the son of a Roman Emperor in times of peace, who besought leave of his father to go to the wars, and went to Cairo, where he fought for the Sultan of Persia against the Caliph of Egypt. On the eve of a great battle, the Sultan took a gold ring of his daughter's, and made her swear that, if he fell in the battle, she would marry the man by whom he sent to her that ring. In the battle the young Roman knight did wonders, and the Sultan, mortally wounded by an arrow, gave to him, as to the worthiest man, the ring to deliver. But the young knight's false bachelor, knowing of that, stole the ring while his master slept, and made haste to supplant him. The bachelor married the princess, and mounted the throne. The knight, his master, died of grief. But the truth becoming known, the Romans came and took the supplanting traitor prisoner from Persia, to be justly punished. Story of Pope Boniface, who supplanted Celestine by teaching a clerk

to blow through a trumpet in the wall when Pope Celestine was abed, and bid him leave his papacy. Also the sad end of Boniface, the proud clerk, misleader of the papacy, who, being imprisoned in a tower, ate his hands for hunger. (Perhaps from an apocryphal history of Boniface.) The deaths of Abner and Achitophel.

The book ends by contrasting the virtue of charity with the vice of envy in the story of Constantine Emperor of Rome, who, when he had a leprous face, was ordered by his physician to bathe it in the blood of children under seven years old. The little ones were, therefore, collected in the palace court; but the weeping of the mothers over their sucking children, and the crying of the young babies, moved Constantine's heart. He would not spill so much blood for himself alone, and sent the mothers home with their children, and with gifts in recompense for their distresses. Then Saint Peter and Saint Paul appeared to him in his sleep, and bade him send to Mount Celion for Sylvester and his clergy, fled thither in dread of him, and learn of them the sure cure for his leprosy. Sylvester came and preached, and the vessel made to contain children's blood being filled with clear water from the well, Constantine was baptised therein, and his leprosy fell from him as fishes' scales. In memory of this, Constantine

> "Withinné Rome anone let founde
> Two churches, whiché he did make
> For Peter and for Poulés sake,
> Of whom he hadde a visïon,
> And yaf therto possessïon
> Of lordship and of worldés good.
> But how so that his will was good
> Toward the Pope and his fraunchise,
> Yet hath it provéd otherwise
> To se the worching of the dede.
> For in croniqué thus I rede:
> Anone as he hath made the yefte,
> A vois was herde on high the lefte [air
> Of which all Romé was adradde,
> And said, This day is venim shadde
> In holy chirche of temporell,
> Which medleth with the spirituell."

Gower took this story from Vincent of Beauvais ("Speculum Historiale," lib. xiii., cap. 47, 48): Godfrey of Viterbo does not tell it, but

refers to it as apocryphal, because it is not to be found in any authentic books or chronicles.

Book III.—Of *Anger* in its five forms.

1. Melancholy. Story of King Æolus, who had two children, Macareus and Canace. Their love became illicit, and their father falling thereby into melancholic frenzy, sent Canace a drawn sword, wherewith to kill herself. After writing a pitiful letter to Machaire, founded upon Ovid's,—

> "In my right hond my penne I hold,
> And in my left my swerde I kepe,
> And in my barme there lith to wepe
> Thy child and min, which sobbeth fast,

she kills herself, and the child rolling out of her bosom, "basketh him about" in the warm blood of his mother. The child was cast into the forest (Ovid, "Heroides," Ep. xi.). Confessor Genius, blaming the father, speaks indulgently of the loves of this brother and sister, and he tells from Ovid how Tiresias was changed into a woman for interfering with the course of nature in two serpents (Ov. "Met.," bk. iii.). This, however, is the story against which the good sense of Chaucer protested in the Prologue to the "Man of Lawes Tale," when of Chaucer himself the Man of Lawes is made to say,—

> "But certainly no word ne writeth he
> Of thilké wicke ensample of Canace,
> That lovéd hire owen brother sinfully:
> (Of all swiche curséd stories I say fy)."

2. Chiding. Story of the patience of Socrates, who, when his wife, after long chiding, vexed at his placidity, emptied over his head the waterpot she had brought from the well, said this was very seasonable; for it was winter, and in winter-time, after the wind had been blowing hard, there usually came a downpour. Story of the strife between Jupiter and Juno when Tiresias, being made arbiter, was blinded by Juno for giving judgment against her. Stories of the crow, a white bird once, turned black for telling of a love of Phœbus; and of the nymph Laar, who was punished for betrayal of a love of Jupiter.

3. Hate. Story of King Nauplius, who wrecked the ships of the

* Gower's version of

> "Dextra tenet calamum; strictum tenet altera ferrum,
> Et jacet in gremio charta soluta meo."

Greeks by misplacing the beacons, in revenge for the murder among them of his son Palamedes on the way home from Troy. ("Geste of Troy.")

4 and 5. Contest and Homicide. Story of Diogenes and Alexander ("Val. Max.," lib. iv., cap. iii., sect. ext. 4). Story of Pyramus and Thisbe (Ov. "Met.," bk. iv.). Story of Phœbus and Daphne (Ov. "Met.," bk. i.). Story of Demophon and Acamas, who, being rejected by their subjects when they returned from Troy, designed utter destruction of the rebels, until Nestor asked how they meant to be kings in a land where there were no people. Story of Orestes (Ovid, "Heroides," Ep. viii.). Story of Alexander and the sea-robber who claimed to be only a poor double of himself ("Gesta Romanorum," Swan's Tr., vol. ii., Tale lxvi., quoted from Augustine "De Civitate Dei"). The argument here, as in many other parts of the poem, and in the verse of Gower generally, is earnest against warfare. It strongly illustrates the condition of England at the time when the lover is bidden

> "loke on every side
> Er that thou falle on homicide,
> Which sinne is now so generall,
> That it wel nigh stant overall
> In holy chirche and ellés where.
> But all the while it is so there,
> The world mot nedé fare amis.
> For whan the well of pité is,
> Through covetise of worldés good,
> Defouléd with shedìng of blood,
> The remenaunte of folke about
> Unnethé stonden in any doubt
> To werre eche other and to slee,
> So it is all nought worth a stre,
> The charité whereof we prechen,
> For we do no thing as we téchen."

Solinus (not, I think, in any printed copies of the "Polyhistor") tells of a bird of prey with a man's face, that after feasting on man's flesh, if it see its own face in a well, the image of that which it has slain, it grieves so that it is dead by the morrow. Story of the reward of Telaphus, son of Achilles, for the mercy he had shown to Teucer ("Geste of Troy").

Book IV. *Sloth.*—1. Delay. Delayed return of Æneas, that caused the death of Dido (Ov. "Met.," bk. xiv.). Delayed return of Ulysses to

Penelope ("Geste of Troy"). "The grete clerk Grostest" made a head of brass, to tell things that befell, and by delay of half a minute lost the labour of seven years. This story, more commonly told of Grosteste's pupil and friend, Roger Bacon, was a favourite mediæval fancy. William of Malmesbury tells of a speaking head made by Pope Sylvester the Second (Gerbert). Such heads were said also to have been made by Albertus Magnus, and by Henry de Villeine, at Madrid. Stow also tells of one made at Oxford in the reign of Edward II. Parable of the wise and foolish virgins.

2. Pusillanimity.

> "For who that nought dare undertake,
> By right he shall no profit take."

Story of Pygmalion, who, by setting his heart on it, gave life to an image of stone (Ov. "Met.," bk. x.). Story of the daughter of King Ligdus, whom her mother pretended to be a boy, because if her infant was a girl it would be slain. The girl, called Iphis, and reared as a boy, was married to a princess, and then, strongly wishing manhood, was by the gods changed into a man (Ov. "Met.," bk. ix.).

3. Forgetfulness. Story of Phyllis at Rhodope, with whom Demophon stayed on his way to Troy, and who, after his departure, hanged herself because he forgot to return; whereupon the gods changed her into a nut-tree, which is to this day called, after Phyllis philliberd, filbert (Ovid, "Heroides," Ep. ii.). Chaucer tells this story at length in the Legend of Good Women; and Gower had read in the same poem his friend's version of other tales that he now tells again, as Pyramus and Thisbe, Medea, Ariadne, Tereus, Tarquin and Lucrece.

4. Negligence.

> "When he the thing may nought amende,
> Than is he ware and saith at ende:
> Ha, woldé God I haddé knowe!*
> Wherof bejapéd with a mowe
> He goth, for whan the greté stede
> Is stolé, than he taketh hede,
> And maketh the stable-dǒré fast."

Stories of Phaeton driving the horses of the Sun (Ov. "Met.," bk. ii.), and the flight of Icarus (Ov. "Met.," bk. viii.).

* "Had-I-wist" was a proverbial phrase in our old poetry.

5. Idleness.

"Which secheth eses many folde.
In winter doth he nought for colde,
In somer may he nought for hete;
So wether that he frese or swete,
Or be he in, or be he oute,
He woll ben idel all aboute."

Story of Rosiphele, daughter of Herupus King of Armenia, who was too idle to love until, on a May-day, coming through the park to a river-bank, and resting under the shade, the gladness of flower, bird, and beast bred quarrel between love and her own heart. Then she saw, riding along under the wood's side, a company of ladies, clothed alike in white and blue, and riding upon fair, white, ambling horses, all saddled with pearls and gold. Each looked like a queen, and Rosiphele shrank into the shade, thinking herself not worthy to ask them who they were. But there came behind a ragged woman, with twenty score and more horse-halters about her waist, who rode on a lame, lean, galled horse, wretchedly saddled, but with a bridle of gold and precious stones. She, being questioned, said that in life she was a king's daughter slow to love, wherefore now she is in rags, and rides on a lean horse behind those lusty ladies, who had been servants to love, and true to those on whom they set their hearts. She now carries their halters, and is but as their horses' knave. For a fortnight in her life she had a mind to love a knight, who died before she could fulfil her purpose, but the thought earned for her the rich bridle to her sorry nag. So having warned all

"Of lové that they be nought idel;
And bid hem thenke upon my bridel,"

she vanished, and Rosiphele, with her heart amended, went home vowing to herself that she would wear no halters. (This story Chaucer told in "The Flower and the Leaf;" its source is the "Lai du Trot," taken from the chronicler Helinand). Story of Jephtha's daughter, and how she bewailed for forty days that she must die unmarried.

But when the Confessor urges the Lover to shake off sloth, and tells how by deeds of arms men have earned love, the Lover replies thus, with emphatic expression of John Gower's Christian aspiration for peace and echo of Walter Map's mind on the subject of crusading:

"And for to slee the hethen alle,
I not what good there mighté falle,

So mochel blood though ther be shad.
This finde I writen how Crist bad
That no man other shuldé slee.
* * * * *
To sleen and fighten they us bidde
Hem whom they shuld, as the boke saith,
Converten unto Cristés feith.
But herof have I great merveile,
How they wol biddé me traveile.
A Sarazin if I slee shall,
I slee the soulé forth withall,
And that was never Cristés lore.
But now—ho there,* I say no more."

Achilles at Troy laid his arms aside for love of Polixena. Confessor replies by telling how Nauplius forced Ulysses to quit Penelope, and go as warrior to Troy; and how Protesilaus, though his wife Laodamia predicted his death if he went, went nevertheless with the besiegers of Troy to his death; and Saul, though the witch prophesied his death, yet went to battle at Gilboa. Education of Achilles by the Centaur Chiron. How Hercules, by consent of the giant sorcerer Achelous, won Dejanira (Ov. "Met.," bk. ix.). How Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons, went armed to the defence of Troy, her death at the hand of Pyrrhus, and burial by the King of Paphlagonia. War of Æneas against Turnus, that won not only Lavinia, but also Italy (Ov. "Met.," bk. xiv.). Falling here into argument on generosity in love, Gower's Confessor adopts the doctrine of John Ball in saying,—

"And for to loke on other side,
How that a gentil man is bore,
Adam, which allé was to-fore,
With Eve his wife, as of hem two,
All was aliché gentil tho."

General praise of the industry and vigour of the ancients, with some examples of their wisdom in a digression on the origin of crafts and sciences and the three philosopher's stones: namely, the vegetable, healing all sicknesses until the hour of death; the animal, helping the five wits of man; and the mineral, which transforms baser metals into gold and silver.

6. Somnolence, sloth's chamberlain. That, says the Lover, is no

* "Ho!" was a cry or stopping in the chase

vice of his. If his lady list to wake of nights for carol and dance in her chamber, then he for the time hates sleep:

"And whan it falleth other gate,
So that her liké nought to daunce,
But on the dees to casté chaunce,
Or axe of lové some demaunde,
Or ellés that her list commaunde
To rede and here of Troilus,
Right as she wold or so or thus,
I am all ready to consent."

Here, among the home entertainments of a young lady in Chaucer's time—song, dance, and dice-play—we have the listening to one who reads from Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida." Story of Ceix King of Trœzen, whose brother Dedalion was changed to a goshawk (Ov. "Met.," bk. xi.). In telling this story, Gower translates effectively into his own English verse Ovid's description of the House of Sleep. Stories of Cephalus and Aurora (Ov. "Met.," bk. i.), of Argus piped to sleep by Mercury (Ov. "Met.," bk. i.), and of Iphis, son of Teucer King of Mysia, who hanged himself for hopeless love of Araxarethe (Anaxarete); whereat she grieved till the gods changed her into an image of stone, which was set up in a temple of Venus, and Iphis buried in a rich tomb at the foot of it (Ov. "Met.," bk. xiv.).

Book V. Of *Avarice*. As in this poem of the deadly sins Pride takes the first place, so Avarice takes the largest space, the Book occupied by this sin being about twice as long as that taken by any one of the other six. Stories of Midas, to whom Bacchus granted that whatever his hand touched should be turned to gold (Ov. "Met.," bk. xi.), and of the punishment of Tantalus, which is like the pains of avarice.

1. Jealousy, the avarice of love. Story of Vulcan, Venus, and Mars. Digression from this to a general sketch of ancient mythology, with a description of the chief gods and goddesses of the Greeks.

"Now loke how they be for to blame."

Bacchus—

"They clepéd him the god of wine,
And thus a gloton was divine."

The priest of Venus plays the Christian. He leaves Venus to the last, for shame, because he is her priest, but when he does take up her

story, he gives an account of her that causes him to add, "See now the foul miscreance of Greeks." From the sketch of heathen mythology the Confessor and priest of Venus passes through the Scripture story of the Jews and the coming of Christ, to a warning of the Lover against errors of the Lollards:

"Now were it good, that thou forthy,
Which through baptismé proprely
Art unto Cristés feith professed,
Beware that thou be nought oppressed
With anticristés Lollardie.
For as the Jewés prophecie
Was set of god for avauntáge,
Right so this newé tapináge
Of Lollardie goéth aboute
To setté Cristés feith in doubte.
The saints, that weren us to-fore,
By whom the feith was first upbore,
That holy chirché stood releved,
That oughten better be beleved
Than thesé, whiché that men knowe
Nought holy, though they feigne and blowe
Her Lollardy in mennés ere.
But if thou wolt live out of fere,
Such newé lorè I rede escheue,
And hold forthright the wey and sue,
As their auncéstres did er this,
So shalt thou nought beleve amis."

Thoas, priest of Minerva at Troy, corrupted with gold, turned away his eyes while the Palladium was stolen. It is so now with the prelates.

"The wardés of the chirché key
Through mishandlingé ben miswreint."

It was otherwise when Peter taught the Jews, Andrew the Greeks, Thomas the Indians, and Paul the Gentiles. Now Avarice rules the Church of Christ.

2. Cupidity. Story of the magic mirror set up in Rome by Virgil the Enchanter, to show the approach of enemies, destroyed by emissaries from the King of Apulia, who practised on the covetousness of Crassus, then the Emperor. They took treasure, buried it in two places, and twice, by this device, appeared able to disclose to the emperor where

treasure was hidden. The third time they told him that there was a far greater treasure hidden under Virgil's mirror, and that they could so prop as to dig under without disturbing it. They dug, and propped with beams, but at night set fire in the mine, and escaped. When the beams were burnt through, the magic mirror fell. The Romans punished their Emperor for his avarice by pouring molten gold into his mouth. (The magical powers of Virgil were told in the Chronicle of Helinand, and by following writers, especially Gervase of Tilbury, in his "Otia Imperialia.")

Cupidity at court, and its various issues to the courtier. Story of a king at whose court there was complaint of this. He took two coffers exactly alike, filled one with straw and stones, and the other with treasure. He then told the complainants what was in each, bade them choose one, and keep the one of their own choosing. Was it his fault if thereupon they confidently chose the coffer stuffed with straw? (From Boccaccio's "Decameron," Day X., Novel i. Its oldest known source is the romance of Barlaam and Josaphat, written in Greek about A.D. 800, by Joannes Damascenus, and incorporated by Vincent of Beauvais [A.D. 1290] in his "Speculum Historiale.") Similar story of Emperor Frederick, two beggars, and two pies. Story of the sordid love of a king's steward of Apulia, and how he lost his wife for ever.

3. False Witness and Perjury. Stories of Deidamia and Achilles, whom Thetis, his mother, had clothed as a maiden, of the perjury of Jason to Medea (Ov. "Met.," bk. vii.), and of Phryxus and Hellen. In the account of Medea's restoring youth to Jason's father, the description, from Ovid ("Met.," bk. vii. ll. 262–278), of the boiling of her caldron probably connects it with the witches' caldron in Macbeth:—

> "And eke Cimpheius, the serpént,
> To her hath all her scalés lent;
> Chelidre her yafe her adders-skin,
> And she to boilen cast hem in;
> And parte eke of the hornéd oule,
> The which men here on nightés houle;
> And of a raven which was tolde
> Of niné hundred winter olde,
> She toke the hede, with all the bille.
> And as the medicine it wille,
> She toke her after the bowele
> Of the see wolf," &c.

4. Usury. Echo's punishment for taking usury of Jupiter's love in despite of Juno. (Ov. "Met.," bk. iii.)

5. Parsimony. Story of Babio, who had the love of Viola, and by niggardliness lost her to the generous young Croceus.

6. Ingratitude. Story of the poor fagot-gatherer, Bardus, who in seeking to help a Roman senator out of a pit in the forest, saved also an ape and a serpent. The lord was ungrateful, but the ape helped the poor man to gather in his fagots, and the serpent brought him in her mouth a precious stone that, as often as he sold it, came back to his purse again. ("Gesta Romanorum," Swan's Tr., vol. ii., Tale xxxix. Originally an Arabian tale in the "Calilah-u-Dumnah," and told by Matthew Paris, under the year 1195, as a parable applied to false friends by Richard I., after his return from the East.) Story of Theseus, who ungratefully forsook Adriagne (Ariadne), and made Phædrá his queen. (Ovid, "Heroides," Ep. x.)

7. Violent seizure. Story of Tereus and King Pandion's daughters, Progne and Philomel. (Ov. "Met.," bk. vi.)

8. Robbery. Story, also from Ovid's "Metamorphoses," of Neptune and Cornix. Story of Jupiter and Callisto, who, being changed by Juno into a bear, had her son Arcas's bow bent against her when they were taken up into heaven as a constellation. (Ov. "Met.," bk. ii.) Story of the chaste Roman youth, Phirinus, who, being so fair that all women looked on him, plucked out his eyes to destroy the charm and the temptation. Story of Emperor Valentinian, who, at eighty years old, when he had subdued many provinces, accounted it his chief triumph that he had brought into subjection his own flesh.

9. Secret theft. Story of Phœbus and Leucothoe, and origin of the sunflower. (Ov. "Met.," bk. iii.) Here again :—

> "Ovidé said, as I shall say,
> And in his Methamor he tolde
> A talé, which is good to holde."

Misadventure of Faunus with Hercules and Eolen sleeping apart in the cave, after exchange of clothes.

10. Sacrilege. Stories of Nebuchadnezzar and the writing on the wall; of the theft of the gold beard, mantle, and ring from the image of Apollo in Rome (from the "Gesta Romanorum," Swan's Tr., vol. i., Tale viii.); and of the abduction of Helen by Paris from the temple of Venus. The book ends with praise of largesse or liberality which keeps the right mean between prodigality and avarice.

Book VI. *Gluttony.* 1. Drunkenness. Story of two tuns of love-drink, sour and sweet, in Jupiter's cellar, with Cupid the blind butler, who often draws from the wrong barrel. Jupiter's answer to

the prayer of Bacchus, when athirst, on the way back from his Oriental victories. Tristram drunk with love for La Belle Isolde, when they had received the drink that Brangweine took them. Story of Pirithous and the Centaurs, drunk at his marriage-feast, who carried off his bride. (Ov. "Met.," bk. xii.) Punishment of the drunkenness of Galba and Vitellus, chiefs in Spain.

2. Delicacy or Daintiness. Delights, in love, of eye, ear, and imagination. The Lover tells the Confessor that he feeds only upon imagination; for all else he "licks honey from the thorn." Dives and Lazarus. Luxury of Nero. Drunkenness and daintiness lead to the use of witchcraft. Story of Circe and Ulysses ("Geste of Troy"). Of Nectanebus and King Philip's wife Olympias, and of the birth and education of Alexander. (Romance of Alexander the Great.) His training in schools of philosophy gives occasion to

Book VII., in which—Confessor owning that

> "It is nought the matere
> Of lové, why we sitten here
> To shrivé, so as Venus bode"—

—the argument upon the seven deadly sins is interrupted with a fluent summary of philosophical knowledge, chiefly a digest from the "Secretum Secretorum," a book falsely ascribed in the Middle Ages to Aristotle, and supposed to be a summary of his philosophy, which Aristotle made, late in life, for the instruction of Alexander. It is here popularised in easy verse by Gower as an outline of what Alexander learnt from Aristotle. It tells of philosophy theoretical, rhetorical, and practical, and of the steps of knowledge from theology downwards; of the elements in nature, and of the temperaments and bodily organs in man;

> "All erthely thing, which God began,
> Was only made to servé man,
> But He the soul all onely made
> Him selven for to serve and glade;"

of the three divisions of the earth; of the great ocean; of Orbis, the fifth element, the shell to the whole mundane egg; of astronomy or astrology, the seven planets and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, of the fifteen chief stars, the stone and herb of each, and their several influences. England's being governed by the moon accounts for a feature in English character, well marked before Gower's time—the love of travel:—

"But what man under his powere
Is bore, he shall his placé chaunge
And seché many londes straunge.
And as of this condición
The mones disposición
Upon the londe of Alemaigne
Is set, and eke upon Britaigne,
Which now is clepéd Engelonde,
For they travaile in every londe."

Of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; of ethics, economics, politics; and finally, as part of politics—still following the "Secretum Secretorum," which has for second title "De Regimine Principum," or as an old English translation has it, "The Secret of Aristotyle, with the Governale of Princes"—Gower proceeds to expound the duties of a king. He tells of Diogenes and of the flatterer who had more servants than Dante:—

"For the poete of his covine
Hath none that woll him cloth and fede,
But a flatrour may reule and lede
A king with all his londe about."

This refers to the story told by Petrarch of the value set upon a court buffoon by Can Grande, who expressed to the poet wonder that the fool pleased all, while he, the man of learning, could not do as much. "You would not wonder," said Dante, "if you knew how friendship is founded on equality in manners and in wit." Gower quotes sayings of kings upon flatterers, and tells of Ahab and Jehoshaphat. He illustrates the incorruptible justice that should grace a king by reference to Maximin, Fabricius, and the Samnites, a law of Emperor Conrad, and the Roman Consul Carmidotorús, who, after a long ride, inadvertently entering the Senate with his sword by his side, died upon it rather than break his own law, that decreed death to those who should come into the Senate wearing arms. He tells how Cambyses flayed an unjust judge, and nailed his skin upon the judgment-seat that was to be occupied by the offender's son ("Gesta Romanorum," Swan's Tr., vol. i., Tale xxix.); and how Lycurgus, whom he calls a lawgiver of Athens, having obtained a promise that his laws should remain unchanged till his return, quitted his country and his kingdom never to come back.

Kings also should have pity. Aristotle told Alexander how

between Cairo and Babylon, in summer heat, two men met as they were entering the wilderness. One said :—

> "I am a Jewe, and by my lawe
> I shall to no man be felawe
> To kepe him trouth in word ne dede."

The other said he was a Pagan, whose law taught him to love all men alike, and to be gracious and debonnaire. The Pagan rode upon an ass, and carried wealth with him. The Jew, being afoot, as the day was hot, asked leave to ride a mile or two. But when he was on the ass, he rode off with it, and with his comrade's wealth. The Pagan lifted his hands humbly in appeal to heaven, and went forth with dreary cheer. Towards night he came to a valley wherein the Jew lay slain by a lion, and his ass stood close by, whole and sound. Story told by Valerius (Maximus) of Codrus, who, being told by Apollo that in a war with the Dorians he must die, or his people be discomfited, chose to die for his people's good. (Also in "Gesta Romanorum," Swan's Tr., vol. i., Tale xli.) Story of Pompey's pity for the King of Armenia, his captive, when, saying it was a more goodly thing to make than to undo a king, he restored to him his rule. Stories of the tyrant Leontius, who cut off the nose and lips of Justinian (the Second), to make him unfit to reign, and himself suffered the like cruelty at the hands of Tiberius (Paulus Diaconus, "Historia Miscella." lib. xix., xx.); of the brass bull of Perillus ("Gesta Rom.," Sw. Tr., vol. i., Tale xlviii.); of Dionysius, who fed his horses with men's flesh, and was himself given to them by Hercules; and of Lycaon, who, for his cannibalism, Jupiter changed into a wolf. The lion spares the man who prostrates himself before his face as asking mercy. Spertachus (Cyrus), King of Persia, who killed where he conquered, warring against Thamyris Queen of the Massagetæ, having taken her son, slew him. Afterwards he was himself taken by her in an ambush, when she drowned him in a bath made of the blood of his princes, telling him that as blood had been his delight, now he should drink his fill. (Justin, lib. i., cap. viii.; Val. Max. ix. 10, ext. 1.) But in a just cause a prince should not dread war—story of Gideon; and on fit occasion be severe—loss of the kingdom by Saul's race for the sparing of Agag. David, in his last days, bade his son Solomon slay Joab. King's Counsellors. Lucia King of Rome stood by the chimney with a knight and his chamberlain, asking them what sort of a king the people said he was. They glosed, and told him that the people laid all fault

upon his council; but the king's fool, who sat by the fire on his stool playing with his bauble, laughed them to scorn, and said:—

> "Sir king, if that it weré so
> Of wisdome in thin owné mode
> That thou thy selven weré good,
> Thy counseil shouldé nought be bad,"

which set the king thinking, and caused him to put away vicious advisers, that he might take to him friends who amended wrongful laws and stayed the oppression of the people.

> "For if the comun people cry
> And than a king list nought to ply
> To heré what the clamour wolde,
> And other wisé than he sholde
> Desdaineth for to done hem grace,
> It hath be seen in many place,
> There hath befallé great contraire,
> And that I find of ensamplaire."

Richard the Second was the examplar in Gower's mind when he wrote thus; but the example he gave was a close parallel to Richard in Rehoboam, who, having been advised by the council of old men to deal justly with his people, gave ear to the scornful counsel of the young, "which was to him his undoing." He was forsaken of his people, and his throne given to Jeroboam. Antony learnt of Scipio to say that he would rather save one of his lieges than have of enemies a thousand dead. The four points of the duty of a king, thus far discussed, are truth, largesse, pity, righteousness; and now the fifth point is that he control the fleshly lusts of nature. Story of Sardanapalus. How Cyrus overcame the Lydians by giving them peace till they had lost their strength in luxury. Amalek's victory over the Hebrews obtained, as Balaam had counselled, by previously sending into their camp a rout of fair women. Solomon turned by his wives to idolatry; partition of his kingdom. Antony's voluptuousness and loss thereby. Story of Tarquin and Lucrece. (From the "Gesta Romanorum," which had it from Augustine's "De Civitate Dei.") Story of Virginius. (Val. Max. vi. 1, 2.) Story of the husbands of Sara, daughter of Raguel, of Rages, a town of Media. Seven in succession had their necks wrung by Asmodeus on the wedding night, because they married for lust only; but the eighth was Tobit, who, taught by Raphael, defied the fiend. (Apocrypha, Tobit, ch. vi.–viii.)

The Lover is thankful to his Confessor for all this instruction, though, he says,

> The talés sounen in min ere
> But yet min herte is elleswhere.
> * * * *
> Forthy, my godé fader dere,
> Leve and speke of my matère
> Touchend of love as we begonne,
> If that there be ought over ronne
> Or ought forgete or left behinde,
> Which falleth unto lovés kinde
> Wherof it nedeth to be shrive,
> Now axeth, so that while I live
> I might amende that is amis.
> *Confessor:* My godé deré soné, yis."

He proceeds therefore in

Book VIII. to start from the fall of Lucifer and the first peopling of the world by Adam and Eve, and after the Deluge by the children of Noah, on his way to inquiry touching *Lust*, the seventh and last of the Deadly Sins. Caligula and his three sisters. Ammon and Thamar. Lot's daughters. King Antiochus and his daughter; this passing to the story of Apollonius of Tyre, which is told at greater length than any other tale in the "Confessio Amantis," and than which there is no tale in the book told better. The story is in the "Gesta Romanorum," and the "Pantheon" of Godfrey of Viterbo, from which Gower says that he took it. It was taken direct from Gower for plot of the play of "Pericles Prince of Tyre," which is among the plays of Shakespeare. Gower, as Chorus, opens and closes that play, and connects some of its parts. The opening speech assigned to him testifies not only to the popularity of this story of his, but also to the use made of this one, and doubtless many other of the tales of the "Confessio Amantis," many years after the poet's death.

> "To sing a song that old was sung,
> From ashes ancient Gower is come;
> * * * *
> It hath been sung at festivals,
> On ember eves, and holy ales;
> And lords and ladies in their lives
> Have read it for restoratives."

This is the last tale in Gower's collection. After hearing it, the Lover entered more particularly with his Confessor into a discussion of

his own affairs. Genius offered to convey to Venus and Cupid a letter from the woeful lover, written with his tears instead of ink. Upon this Venus appeared to him :

> "She axeth me, what was my name.
> Madame, I saidé, Johan Gower."

She told him that the complaints of his letter were against Nature :

> "For lovés lust and lockés hore
> In chambre accorden nevermore.
> And though thou feigne a yong corage,
> It sheweth well by thy visage
> That oldé grisel is no fole [foal]."

Thus bidden to remember his age, he became chill, pale, and swooned. Then Cupid came with lusty youths, adorned and garlanded, and a loud sound of mirth and music.

> "There was Tristram, which was beleved
> With Bele Isolde, and Lancelot
> Stode with Gunnor, and Galahot
> With his lady."

And many more, the recital of whose names is chiefly a recitation of the characters of the love tales he has been telling. Then came towards Venus, with a soft pace, Elde, who had a smaller company than youth ; David and Solomon, Samson, Virgil, Ovid—old men who had been servants to love ; and they, coming to the place where Venus stood and the poet lay, with one voice prayed for his sake. Upon which Venus bade Cupid comfort him, and he did this by drawing the fiery dart out of his heart. Then Venus put over his heart an ointment more cold than any key, and held to him a mirror, in which he saw his faded colour, dim sad eyes, face wrinkled with age, and hoary hair. He compared, therefore, the course of his life to the twelve months of the year. Venus then, laughing, asked him what love was, and he replied that he knew not. So he received Absolution from Genius, and from Venus a pair of black beads hung about his neck, inscribed "Pur reposer," with the counsel—

> "My soné, be well ware therefore
> And kepe the sentence of my lore,
> And tarie thou in my court no more,
> But go there vertue moral dwelleth,
> Where ben thy bokés, as men telleth,
> Which of long timé thou hast write."

The name of "moral Gower," given to his friend by Chaucer, in the closing dedication of his "Troilus and Cressida," appears thus at once to have passed into use. Gower, in recognising it, made Venus add, with pleasant compliment, reminder to his friend Chaucer, that he also was growing old and ripe for other work than songs of love. For thus spoke Venus to the aged Gower, whom she had dismissed from her court:

"And grete well Chaucer, when ye mete
As my disciple and my poete.
For in the flourés of his youth,
In sondry wise, as he well couth
Of ditties and of songés glade,
The which he for my saké made,
The lond fulfilled is over all;
Whereof to him in speciall
Above all other I am most holde.
Forthy, now in his daiés olde,
Thou shalt him tellé this messáge,
That he, upon his later age
To sette an end of all his werke,
As he which is min ouné clerke,
Do make his Testament of Love,
As thou has do thy shrifte above,
So that my Court it may recorde.

From a later copy of the "Confessio Amantis" this passage was omitted when the occasion for it had passed away; when Chaucer, acting pleasantly on Gower's hint (or, as will appear more likely, finishing what he was about when his old friend thus alluded to his work), was producing his "Canterbury Tales," the retention of this graceful reminder that he also was now too old for the writing of love ditties would have been not so much a compliment as an impertinence. Venus, having spoken, vanished into the sky. Then Gower went home "a softé pas," with his heart set upon his country; and being come home, he says, to the Creator of kings

"Upon my baré knees I praie,
That he this londe in siker waie
Woll set upon good governaunce.
For if men take in remembraunce
What is to live in unité"
* * * *

And so the poem ends, as it opened, by earnestly calling upon all classes of Englishmen to do their duty before God As for the old poet, his work is done as a writer—

> " And thus forthy my finall leve
> I také now for ever more."

I write no more of earthly love, so various and fickle in its nature, that gives no man fulness of delight.

> " But thilké lové, which that is
> Within a mannés herte affirmed
> And stant of charité confirmed,
> Such love is godly for to have,
> Such lové may the body save,
> Such lové may the soule amende.
> The highé God such love us sende
> Forth with the remenaunt of grace,
> So that above, in thilké place
> Where resteth love and allé pees,
> Our joié may ben endéles."

These are the last lines of Gower's English poem.

Gower's Library.

Notes of their probable source added to the account here given of the tales in the "Confessio Amantis" will have served to indicate the contents of a library of a highly-educated English gentleman in the fourteenth century. Something of Scripture history, a well-worn Ovid—Chaucer had a Virgil and a Livy—historical and other works of Churchmen, Augustine's "De Civitate Dei," Cassiodorus, Isidorus, Paulus Diaconus, the "Pantheon" of Godfrey of Viterbo, Helinand, Vincent of Beauvais; some of the later of the old historians, as Valerius Maximus, Josephus, and Trogus Pompeius, or Justin; at the head of philosophy, the "Secretum Secretorum," ascribed to Aristotle, with its doctrines of the philosopher's three stones and of the government of princes; in fiction, the prose tales of the "Gesta Romanorum," "Barlaam and

Josaphat," the "Seven Sages," some French lays and fabliaux, and other collections; the mediæval "Geste of Troy," in various forms, but founded usually upon the prose narrative of Dares Phrygius, or the metrical version of Guido Colonna; the favourite romance of "Alexander the Great," and as large a collection as could be afforded of the Arthurian and other metrical romances, then in much request; some writings of Petrarch; the "Roman de la Rose," and copies of the newest fashionable poems out of France, allegorical romances and short fancy pieces, "that highten balades, rondels, virelaies," poems of Froissart, Gransson, Machault, and Eustache Deschamps.

The books last named were in favour with Chaucer and all who cultivated polite literature in those days; but though he himself wrote French balades, the bent of Gower's mind seems to have been towards more serious work. The spirit of his "Confessio Amantis" is like that of the "Vox Clamantis," religiously earnest and practical; but it is a poem of less force, because the poet is not speaking directly from his own soul to the minds and hearts of his readers. His utterance is less direct and natural; his voice comes muffled to us through the artificial wrappings of a plan that did not interest himself. Yet he speaks as directly as his plan will let him. Of its main spirit enough has been shown; but as he professes to write here of Love, it remains to be noted that in no writer of this period have we the master-passion figured so distinctly as what it was, in his time, commonly taken to be, a strong animal instinct. The most remarkable expression of this is to be found in the too tolerant comment upon Ovid's tale of Canace. Chaucer's rebuke of this tale represented, doubtless, the opinion of many; but Chaucer, alone (who, with a clear intellect and a fine sense of youth and beauty, married early enough to correct by his own experience his observation of society), had in those days attained at all, and he

Gower on Love.

had attained but imperfectly, to the perception of a sacred bond, spiritual and indestructible, in true marriage between man and woman. The earnest and religious Englishman, to whom his friend Chaucer gave the name of "moral Gower," is never consciously indelicate; there is not a coarse jest in all his poetry; he is respectful to women, says there are "enough of good wives." But even for that reason—because we feel its sober seriousness—the materialism of his view of love is the more noticeable. There is no poet of his time who makes us feel so often as Gower does in the "Confessio Amantis," the touch, as it were, of naked flesh; who so often leads us to remember that he wrote when night-clothes were not worn.

Of Gower's English verse the few passages quoted in the preceding sketch of the "Confessio Amantis" will suffice to show that it was musical. Indeed, considering the inordinate stress laid upon rhymes and verbal harmonies by the Provençal school of poets, and all those whom they inspired, it is obvious that no poet of the fourteenth century would have been accounted tolerable if he wrote rugged verse. If the text be accurate, and we pronounce their words as men pronounced them when they were first written, the lines of Gower and Chaucer are, indeed, perfectly smooth. It is hard to suppose that, at a time when throughout Europe even inordinate stress was laid upon mechanical excellence in versifying, our best poets and ablest men were unable to count syllables into sets of eight or ten, and arrange words so that their accents should fall in the proper places; and a closer study of our early writers has removed, during the present century, much of the delusion of ignorance that ascribed to ruggedness of theirs the inability of later readers to return to the old methods of pronunciation. Thus, in Gower's English, as in modern German, the word eye is a dissyllable:—

Gower's English.

> "Whose eyé may nothing asterte
> The privetés of mannés herte."

so are the words love, name, vice, chirche, pope, write, here (hear), were, and the like, when a consonant follows; but before a vowel they are monosyllables. The addition of "th" to such words as "make" and "speke" did not, in Gower's time, as now, transform them into dissyllables; but "maketh" and "speketh" were words of one syllable. Let us apply these rules to the reading of what seems to be a rugged couplet:—

> "And all maketh lové well I wote
> Of which min herte is ever hote."

Here "maketh" is, as always, a monosyllable, and "love" is a dissyllable, because the "e" precedes a consonant; as "herte" in the next line would have been a dissyllable if its final "e" had not been followed by a vowel.

Another point especially to be remembered in the reading of old English is that the French words introduced into the language, being still near to their French source, retained much of their French pronunciation, and that this fact often affects the placing of the accent. The accent now placed on the first syllable was in Gower's time on the last syllable in such words as natùre, honèst, comùn (common), honoùr, justìce, envy (which made envíous, as

> "How Perse after his falsé tonge
> Hath so thenvíous bellé rong")

purchàse, Constànce, resòn, gracïòus. In such a word as consciëncë we have an example of the accent placed as in French and the sounding of the final e before a consonant, thus making the word a double stumbling-block to those who require of writers in the fourteenth century foreknowledge of the pronunciation of the eighteenth or nineteenth:—

> "But sone, if thou wilt live in rest
> Of consciëncë well assised,
> Er that thou slee, be wel avised."

If these principles be borne in mind; with Gower's use of "sigh" for "saw," "nought" for "not," in the modern sense, and the old form of "not" from "nitan," answering to "wot" from "witan," and in the sense of "know not;" while the truth is firmly recognised that every line, if it have been rightly copied, wants only right reading to fall into music, very few difficulties will be found even by the inexpert reader of Gower's verse.* Assuredly it is not in want of the mechanical quality of smoothness that we are to look for the shortcomings of his English poem. Its structure is too artificial, and its literalness not being, as in the "Vox Clamantis," the plain speaking of a patriot whose soul is stirred, the want of original creative power becomes

* There are ten MSS. of the "Confessio Amantis" at Oxford, four at Cambridge, three in the British Museum, others at Dublin, and in private collections. MS. Harl. 3490, in the Brit. Mus., is a copy, written in the fifteenth century, of the version dedicated to King Richard II. The Stafford MS. in the library of the Earl of Ellesmere, from which some pages have been cut out for the illuminations at the opening of four of the books, is thought to have been written between 1399 and 1413, and to have belonged to Henry IV. It is a copy of the Lancaster version, with alterations, omissions, and additions, especially in the latter part of the fifth and in the sixth and seventh books, not commonly met with in old copies, but found in Berthelette's edition. MSS. Harl. 7184 and 3869 represent the ordinary Lancaster version.—The first printed edition was Caxton's, in 1483; the second, somewhat modernised in spelling, that printed by Thomas Berthelette, in Fleet Street, printer to the King's grace. Its date is 1532. In 1554 Berthelette printed another edition, still more modernised, which is that from which Alexander Chalmers, in 1810, reprinted the "Confessio Amantis" in his "Works of the English Poets from Chaucer to Cowper." Dr. Reinhold Pauli collated the text of Berthelette's first edition with the Harleian MSS. 7184 and 3869, using the Richard II. version (MS. Harl. 3490) and the Stafford MS. in places where they were important, and taking much pains to restore the spelling, and thereby preserve the metre. The result of his labour was an edition in three vols. (London, 1857), which contains the best text of Gower's English poem.

evident. But while his strength is in his Latin poem even his "Confessio Amantis" entitled Gower to the escape he has had from the fate that has befallen the poems of the "philosophical Strode."

At the end of "Troilus and Cressida," Chaucer wrote—

> "O morall Gower, this booke I direct
> To thee and to the philosphicall Strode,
> To vouchsafe there need is to correct
> Of your benignities and zealés good."

Ralph Strode was a Dominican of Jedburgh Abbey, in highest credit as a theologian and philosopher, about the year 1370. He studied first among his Scottish countrymen at Jedburgh, then was sent to Paris, travelled over France, Germany, and Italy, and even visited Syria and the Holy Land. After his return he was appointed rector in several new monasteries. Leland says that Ralph Strode was "one of the most illustrious ornaments of Merton College." He was in credit as a poet in both Latin and English, and wrote in verse Fables and Panegyrics; in prose, an account of his journey to the Holy Land, a book, once famous, in elegiac verse, commonly known as the "Phantasma Radulphi,"* and "Positions and Eighteen Arguments against John Wyclif." Some portions of Strode's Latin writing were printed in Germany in the sixteenth century, as parts of other now forgotten books, his "Phantasmata," and other works, in Venice, with the comments of Alexander Sermoneta, in 1517; but nothing of this has ever been printed in England. Ralph Strode.

A writer of the life of Chaucer prefixed to Urry's edition found appended in Latin to a MS. of Chaucer's treatise on the Astrolabe this colophon:—"Here ends the treatise of the conclusions of the Astrolabe, compiled by

* On the strength of it Leland calls him "nobilis poeta."—"Collectanea," vol. iv., p. 55 of Hearne's edition.

Geoffrey Chaucer for the use of his son Lewis, at that time a student of the University of Oxford, and under the tuition of the most excellent philosopher, Master N. Strode." Thence he inferred, in spite of the different initial to the Christian name, that Chaucer's friend, "the philosophical Strode," was also the tutor of his ten-year-old son. Distinctive mention of the tutor Strode as "the most excellent philosopher," makes it more probable that the writer of the note miswrote N for R as the initial of Strode's Christian name, than that the reference should be to another person.

CHAPTER IX.

WRITERS OF CHRONICLES.

WE return to the long line of the monastic chroniclers. There is a manuscript in the Harleian Collection * which is of the end of the tenth century, and contains a series of brief Latin entries of "Annales Cambriæ." Another manuscript of the close of the thirteenth century, written on fly-leaves prefixed to an abridged copy of Domesday Book in the Public Record Office, gives the Welsh Annals, with a continuation to the year 1286 which becomes more detailed after the year 1097. In the Cotton Collection there is a third manuscript of these Annals, extending to the year 1288. From these MSS. the "Annales Cambriæ" were edited by the Rev. John Williams ab Ithel, in 1860, for the Rolls Series of Chronicles and Memorials. The same editor contributed in the same year to the same series, "Brut y Tywysogion; or, The Chronicle of the Princes," which is written in Welsh, but seems to have been translated out of Latin. The editor identifies it with a once popular Chronicle of the Abbey of Stratflur, Strata Florida, or of the associated Abbey of Conway. This chronicle is based upon Caradoc of Llancarvan,† and ends with the feast of St. Mary, 1282, when "Gruffud, son of Maredudd, son of Owain, son of Gruffudd, son of the Lord Rhys; and Rhys, son of Maelgwn the Little, son of Maelgwn, son of the Lord Rhys; possessed themselves of the town and

Welsh Annals.

* No. 3,859.

† "E. W." II. 95, 96.

castle of Aberystwith; and they burned the town and the castle, and destroyed the ramparts that were round the castle and the town; sparing the lives of the garrison, because the days of the Passion were near."

Ralph Higden's "Polichronicon" had the chief place among histories produced in England in the fourteenth century. His Christian name was written variously as Ranulfus, Ranulf, Ralph, Radulphus, Randall, Rondoll, Rondle; and his surname still more variously: Higdenus, Higden, Hygden, Hikeden, Hykedoun, Higedenus, Higgeden, Higgened, Higgenet, Heggenet. Even two centuries later, uniformity of spelling was so little regarded that an educated nobleman might at different times spell his own name in different ways. This historian is the monk of St. Werburg's Abbey in Chester of whom we have already spoken as the Randal Hignet who went three times to the Pope to obtain leave to write miracle plays in the language of the people, and who is regarded as the author of the Chester Plays, first acted in the mayoralty of Sir John Arnway (A.D. 1327–28).

Ralph Higden.

Ralph Higden, born in the west of England, took the monastic vows of a Benedictine in the Abbey of St. Werburg, as a young man, in or about the year 1299. St. Werburg's was a rich abbey; a shrine made for the saint in Higden's time is now the Bishop's throne in Chester Cathedral. Bale, in his "Century of English Writers," says that after Higden had lived sixty-four years in the monastery he died an old man, about the feast of St. Gregory—March 12—in the year 1363. If he took his vows in 1299, at the age of about seventeen, his age at death was about eighty. Leland credits him with personal research in Shropshire, Derbyshire, and Lancashire. His supposed visit to the Pope at Rome in 1327–8 is subject to doubt, because the Popes were then at Avignon, and the memorandum giving us that information was written on a

Harleian MS. in the year 1628. So late a recorder may, however, having reason for noting that Higden went to the Pope, have taken for granted that he went to Rome.

There is no doubt as to Ralph Higden's authorship of the "Polichronicon," which remained popular throughout the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth century had not passed out of use. Bishop Nicholson, in his "English Historical Library," considered Higden's "Polichronicon" to have been plagiarised from the "Polycratica Temporum" of Roger Cestrensis. It is a case, however, not of plagiarism but identity. Roger of Chester is Ralph of Chester, by confusion of the name itself, or by transfer to the chronicle of the name of another monk of St. Werburg's—Roger Frend, perhaps—who was afterwards Abbot of Chester, and who may have been among those of the community who set Higden at work. Polycraticon is in like manner a variation upon Polichronicon, and the contents of the MSS. of Polycraticon and Polichronicon differ no more than was usual with different MSS. of the same book.

"Polichronicon."

The first of the Seven Books of Higden's "Polichronicon" contains a sketch of the known world, giving prominence, of course, to Judea and Jerusalem, and particular prominence to Great Britain. In the second chapter Higden names the chief authorities on whom he depends for his facts. He uses Pliny and Justin, Isidore, Solinus, Bede, William of Malmesbury, Giraldus Cambrensis, John of Salisbury, Petrus Comestor, Paulus Diaconus (from whom he takes the legend of the Seven Sleepers); also the Cosmography of Æthicus, who probably was Julius Honorius, and an unpublished Geographia Universalis, which survives in manuscript. He quotes Cicero, and occasionally Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Juvenal, with, among other of the Fathers, Gregory the Great, Augustine, and Jerome. When Higden comes to his chapter on Wales—the thirty-

eighth of the First Book, he trips into a loose form of rhyme :—

" Sub titulis his quatuor
Terræ statum exordior:
Primo de causa nominis ;
Secundo de præconiis ;
Tandem de gentis ritibus ;
Quarto de mirabilibus."

Higden's translator, John of Trevisa, passes in like manner from prose to verse when he comes to the chapter on Wales, which is throughout versified :—

" In þis foure titles I fonde
To telle the state of that londe.
Cause of þe name I schal telle,
And þan preise þe lond I welle.
Than I schal write wiþ my pen
Alle þe maneres of þe men.
Than I schal fonde
To telle mervailes of þe londe."

After Wales comes England, and Higden's account of England occupies a third part of the whole description of the world in his First Book. It is in the fifty-ninth chapter of his First Book—the last but one—that Higden gives much information of his own upon the language of the English people, *De Incolarum Linguis.* There are, he says, as many languages as races. The Scotch and the Welsh have retained their ways of speech ; the English had from the beginning three forms of speech—northern, midland, and southern—as proceeding from three German peoples ; but by mixture, first with the Danes, then with the Normans, the national speech has been much corrupted. The corruption had, says Higden, another cause. From the time of the coming of the Normans the children at school were taught to construe in French. The children of nobles speaking French from the cradle, the rustics who desired to

seem the more respectable would imitate them as they could. While also the Normans had but one form of their language, the English of the east and west understood each other better than those of the north and south; men of the midlands, however — the Mercians — understood English of the north and south better than either of those could understand the other.

Passing, in his Second Book, from the world at large to man, the microcosm, Higden begins with a comparison between the World and Man. Then he proceeds to the history of the First Age of the World, from Adam to Noah's Flood. In the sixth chapter of the Second Book he proceeds to the Second Age, from the Flood to the Birth of Abraham. The Third Age, with the lives of Abraham and the Patriarchs, extends to the twelfth chapter. Then follow the histories of Moses and Joshua, and of events regarded as contemporary—Greek myths, the Trojan war, and the mythical origin of Britain. The Third Age ends in the twenty-eighth chapter of Higden's Second Book with the death of Saul. The Fourth Age begins in the same book with the reign of David; and the Second Book ends at the thirty-sixth chapter with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, which closed the Fourth Age of the World.

Higden's Third Book, opening with the Fifth Age of the World, tells the history of the Captivity, with the ten visions of Daniel, the life of Cyrus, the expulsion of Tarquin from Rome; it identifies Cambyses with the Ahasuerus of Ezra, tells of the rebuilding of the second temple, and of the appointment of Tribunes of the People at Rome; it passes from a chapter on Pythagoras to an account, drawn chiefly from St. Augustine, of the various branches of philosophy; it interweaves mythical British with ancient history, tells of Demosthenes, of Plato, and of Aristotle, and of Alexander the Great; Higden then passes to the history of Egypt and of the kingdom of Syria; follows Roman

history through the Punic Wars, and closes his Fourth Book in the reign of Augustus at the time of the birth of Christ, which is the beginning of the Sixth Age of the World.

Higden's Fourth Book then interweaves the history of the Early Christian Church with history of Rome, tells the rise of the Eastern Empire, and closes with the invasions of the Huns under Attila.

The Fifth Book carries the story on, and takes up also the history of the Papacy, through which it passes to the Ecclesiastical History of England, to the Franks, to Charlemagne and his successors, to the Normans in France, and to the Danes in England; so ending the Fifth Book that the Sixth begins with King Alfred.

The Sixth Book is mainly History of England from King Alfred to the death of Harold, with due attention to the Franks and the Normans, some attention to Germany, and attention always to the Popes of Rome.

In his Seventh Book, beginning at the Conquest, Higden brings down the "Polichronicon" to his own time.

"Eulogium Historiarum."

Free use was made of the "Polichronicon" by the monk Thomas of the Abbey of Malmesbury, who interwove notes on the history of his abbey, called the monks there his "commonachi," and, at the request of his prior, wrote a general history under the name of "Eulogium," also "Eulogium Historiarum," and, as he himself finally called it, "Eulogium Temporis." It extends from the Creation to the year 1366. One MS. contains a continuation of it by an unknown author, from 1366 to 1413. In another MS. there is a less valuable continuation by another writer, from 1362 to 1490. The "Eulogium," with its continuations,* has been edited in three volumes by Mr. Frank

* "Eulogium (*Historiarum sive Temporis*) : Chronicon ab Orbe Condito usque ad Annum Domini M.CCC.LXVI., a Monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum. Accedunt continuationes duæ, quarum una ad Annum M.CCCC.XIII., altera ad Annum M.CCCC.XC. perducta

Scott Hayden from a MS. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge,* for the series of Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. The Cambridge MS. is all written by one hand, and has erasures, interpolations, unfilled spaces, and notes which mark it as the original work which the author says that he wrote himself with his own hand. One of the erasures changes the name of the work from "Compendium" to "Eulogium," perhaps because there was a contemporary "Compendium Historiarum" by William of Coventry.

In its First Book, founded chiefly upon the "Historia Scholastica" of Peter Comester and Higden's "Polichronicon," the "Eulogium" extends from the Creation to the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. The Second Book, making much use of the "Chronicon Pontificum" of Martinus Polonus, and some use of the Golden Legend, follows the history of the Church and of the Pope to Urban VI. The Third Book, using Orosius, the "Chronicon Imperatorum" of Martinus Polonus, William of Malmesbury, and the "Polichronicon," begins with the Four Great Empires of the World, follows the history of Rome, and continues it through Emperors of the East and West, ending with the German Emperor Frederick the Second. The Fourth Book borrows chiefly from Higden and from authorities that

est." Edited by Frank Scott Hayden, B.A. In the series of Chronicles and Memorials published under direction of the Master of the Rolls. Vol. I., 1858; Vol. II., 1860; Vol. III., 1863.

* R. 7. 2, collated with four other MSS.; Cotton. Galba E vii., which has the continuation to the year 1413; Cotton. Cleopatra D ii.; Trin. Coll. Dublin, E 2, 26; Lincoln's Inn Library, Hale, No. 73, a MS.—the earliest transcript—which was given in 1427 to the Priory of Kirkby Belers in Leicestershire. In this MS. the Kalendary Chronicle, which precedes the "Eulogium," is continued to the year 1534, and the "Eulogium" itself to the year 1490, in two different hands, one of the fifteenth and one of the sixteenth century.

Higden used, a geographical account of the inhabited world; and the last book—the Fifth—is confined to the history of England from Brut downwards; first using Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace, it goes on to William of Malmesbury, then uses Nicholas Trivet, and becomes at last a contemporary authority of events to the year 1366. The latter entries in the original MS. were evidently made at different dates, sometimes they use the present tense and cite the testimony of eye-witnesses. The continuation to 1413 has also a very high value as contemporary record. It is part of the rich material from which modern historians have to build up again the true form of the past.

A very free use of Higden's "Polichronicon" by the author of the "Eulogium" is said to be associated at the outset, in a fashion not yet obsolete, with a disposition to glance slightingly at the book on which he has drawn heavily, and to which he is most in debt. But the use of preceding records of the past was taken for granted by the mediæval chroniclers; and I doubt whether any covert sneer is intended by this monk's transformation of Higden's introductory view of his work into the declaration that he is himself unfit and insufficient to set forth high truths or follow in the steps of great historians. Life, he says, is short, his sense is dull, his spirit torpid, his memory is apt to slip, and he is impeded by fruitless occupations. He speaks as one who is really weary of the dull routine of monastic life that thwarts the use of active virtue, dulls the mind with long readings and sermons, and opens the way to evil thoughts. He accepts, therefore, the suggestion that he should write a history, little able as he is, that he may do something to keep off the devil.

Among the fresh details of contemporary history in the Fifth Book of the "Eulogium" is an illustration of the campaign of Poitiers by an Itinerary of the Black Prince, from the 4th of August to the 2nd of October, 1356, written

by one who seems to have accompanied the expedition. A MS. of the Itinerary itself was known to Dr. George Petrie, but the only copy of it now known is that which was embodied in the "Eulogium Historiarum." The continuation of this Chronicle from 1366 to 1413 includes valuable information not to be found elsewhere, and covers a period of great historical interest. The "Eulogium" illustrates the foreign policy of John of Gaunt, and the dispute with the Pope, giving the only existing record of proceedings at the Council of Westminster in 1374, on the Pope's claim of a subsidy from England in aid of his war against the Florentines. Upon the second day, when the Archbishop of Canterbury did not know what opinion to give, the Black Prince, who took active part in resistance to the Pope's claim of temporal power founded on the gift of King John, said to the Archbishop, "Answer, you ass. It is your duty to inform us all." Upon which the Archbishop gave his opinion against the Pope's claim; all the bishops followed suit, and a monk of Durham who had argued for the Pope said that he was now better informed. This continuation of the "Eulogium" includes also the Jack Straw rebellion and the last years of Wyclif.

The editor of the "Eulogium," after a minute analysis of its contents and of the sources from which they were drawn, says that "it might be described with sufficient accuracy as a new edition of the 'Polichronicon,' with a continuation down to the year 1366."

The "Polichronicon" and its continuation were also the originals of a continuation of the "Chronicles of his Own Time," by Adam of Murimuth. But Adam of Murimuth himself derived his Chronicle, he says, "out of the book of his own days." He found a want of annals later than the year 1305, and began to supply it, taking the years from 1303 to 1306 from an anonymous Chronicle that he found at Westminster, and then depending

Adam of Murimuth.

upon his own knowledge and that of his contemporaries. Adam of Murimuth may have been born about the year 1286, since he was Proctor for the University of Oxford in a cause against the Dominicans, and received in 1311 the grant of a yearly pension of sixty shillings.* He could then hardly have been younger than twenty-five, for he was already Doctor of Laws. In 1317 he acted as Proctor for the Church of Canterbury in a successful embassy to the Roman Court, then at Lyons, to obtain from Pope John XXII. a subsidy for Edward the Second in his war with Scotland. Adam de Murimuth was sent on another embassy to the Roman Court in 1323, with note of high confidence from the king, who gave him plenary powers. A part of his commission in that embassy was to oppose a suit for the removal of excommunication and interdict from Robert Bruce and the kingdom of Scotland. In this case also his pleading was successful. He was then Canon of Hereford; in 1325 he was Vicar-General to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in the same year he was appointed to the canonry of Old Street, in St. Paul's, London. In 1327 he was collated to the prebendal stalls of Nesdon in Wiltshire, and of Harleston in Lincoln. In 1328 he was Precentor of Exeter; in 1335 he was also Commissary of the Bishop of London, and he is said to have obtained in 1337 the prebend of Wyadsbury in Lincoln. Appointment was made on the 2nd of May, 1370, to a stall in Exeter Cathedral, said to have been vacated by the death of Adam de

* Digby Rolls, quoted by Bishop Tanner, who is cited as chief authority for facts in the life of Adam of Murimuth by the editor of his Chronicle for the English Historical Society: "Adami Murimuthensis Chronica sui Temporis, nunc primum per decem annos aucta (M.CCC.III. — M.CCC.XLVI), cum eorundem Continuatione (ad M.CCC.LXXX.), a quodam Anonymo, ad fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum edidit et recensuit Thomas Hog. Londini, Sumptibus Societatis M.DCCC.XLVI."

Murimuth. He must have died therefore in 1370, at the age of about eighty-four.

Murimuth's Chronicle extends as an original record over the forty years from 1306 to 1346. The continuation extends to the year 1380, two of its last notes being the condemnation by Pope Urban VI. of twenty-four conclusions drawn from the works of Wyclif and his disciples, and the fact that it rained nearly every day in that year from St. Luke's Day (the twelfth of October) until Christmas. It is in this continuation of Murimuth's Chronicle that there is a record of a fierce storm on the 15th of January, 1362, to which we shall find reference made in Langland's "Vision of Piers Plowman."

Walter de Hemingburgh.

Walter de Hemingburgh, who was a Canon of the Priory of Gisborough, near Clive in Yorkshire, compiled a History of England from the Conquest to the year 1308, and is said to have died at Gisborough in 1347. He seems to have belonged to a family of some mark settled at Hemingborough in the East Riding of Yorkshire. His Chronicle is at first compiled from Eadmer, Hoveden, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Newbury. It becomes more original after the year 1195, and as the writer comes into his own time he uses information of eye-witnesses. Thus, when speaking of two English canons who escaped from Scotland, he adds, "of whom one stayed some time with us, and with his own lips told us of his peril." He inserted also texts of important charters. Hemingburgh's Chronicle broke off in the history of the reign of Edward the Second at the year 1313, perhaps because the writer was unwilling to commit himself to any record of the closing years of that unhappy reign. But he proceeded at once to the beginning of the reign of Edward the Third—"De Gestis Edwardi Tertii, et cæteris eventibus"—and continued his Chronicle from 1327 to 1346, ending with the heading to an unwritten chapter that was to

have told of the battle of Crécy. Sir Thomas Hardy was of opinion that the work of Hemingburgh himself might have ended with the year 1297, and that the rest of the work ascribed to him may have been written by a continuator.*

St. Alban's Chroniclers.

To the chroniclers of St. Alban's may now be added the name of William Rishanger, a monk of St. Alban's, to whom Bale has ascribed seven works which are not all by one author.

William Rishanger.

William Rishanger probably was a native of the village now called Rishangles, about four miles from Eye in Suffolk. Bale reports of him that he was a monk of St. Alban's, and in 1259 succeeded Matthew Paris in his office of chronographer, with a stipend from King Henry III., that court office being then usually delegated to a St. Alban's monk. In this office which, if it existed,

* Hemingburgh's Chronicle was edited in 1848 for the English Historical Society, in two volumes, by Hans Claude Hamilton: "Chronicon Domini Walteri de Hemingburgh, vulgo Hemingford nuncupati, Ordinis Sancti Augustini Canonici Regularis, in Cœnobio Beatæ Mariæ de Gisburn, De Gestis Regum Angliæ. Ad fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum recensuit Hans Claude Hamilton." The MSS. are (1) of the close of the fourteenth century, in the College of Arms, presented by William Howard, Earl of Arundel. (2) In the British Museum, Lansdown 239, of the middle of the fourteenth century. This is the oldest copy extant, and has lost many of its early leaves. It ends with the death of Edward I. (3) Cotton. MS. Tiberius B iv., written in the fourteenth century, and ending, like the MS. in the College of Arms, at the year 1304. (4) Harleian MS. 691, a copy on paper of the MS. in the College of Arms. (5) Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, has a complete copy on paper in a late hand, as far as the year 1312. Also Cotton. MS. Nero D ii. has a modern transcript of the reign of Edward III., and Vespasian A ix. contains a fragment of the reign of Edward I. A MS. of the reign of Edward III. is in Magdalen College, Oxford, and a MS. of the Chronicle at Trinity College, Cambridge, R. 5, 10, contains the whole history from the Conquest to the battle of Crécy. All MSS. that contain the reigns of Edward II. and Edward III. ascribe them to Walter of Hemingburgh.

there is no evidence that Rishanger ever held, he wrote, says Bale, several works, including the "Opus Chronicorum" (a continuation of Matthew Paris), "Gesta and Annals of Edward I." He was alive, Bale adds, in 1312, aged sixty-two: so that, by Bale's account, he must have been nine years old when he succeeded Matthew Paris as the King's Chronographer. Mr. Riley, who has edited Rishanger's Chronicle and other St. Alban's histories,* shows that, if William Rishanger wrote the second part of it (1272–1306), he must have been living in 1327, or later; but he believes him to have compiled only the earlier part (1259–1272), which alludes to the marriage of Gilbert Earl of Gloucester in 1290.

An "Opus Chronicorum" of the earlier years of the fourteenth century—written at the desire of an abbot who died in 1308—and the first work ascribed by Bale to Rishanger, contains mistakes, especially of date, which are corrected in another Chronicle called Rishanger's, of which a part at least was written after the death of Edward II. The book of "Gesta Edwardi I." begins with the year 1297. The "Opus Chronicorum" ended with the year 1296, and William Rishanger, who signs his name to the "Gesta Edwardi I.," may have meant that record to be a continuation of the "Opus Chronicorum." In the book of the Deeds of Edward I. Rishanger twice refers to facts of later date that will, he says, afterwards be told. But this after-telling was by another monk of St. Alban's—John de Trokelowe—whose "Annales" extend from the year 1307 to the year 1323. Although these Annals record the reign of Edward II., they must have been written in the reign of Edward III. at least as late as the year

John of Trokelowe.

* "Wilhelmi Rishanger . . et Quorundam Anonymorum Chronica et Annales regn. Hen. III. et Edw. I. Edited by Henry Thomas Riley, M.A.," 1865, in Chronicles and Memorials issued under direction of the Master of the Rolls.

1330, for they allude to the death of both the Roger Mortimers. The Annals of John de Trokelowe, ending with the year 1323, were continued by the "Chronica" of Henry de Blaneford (Blanquefort, near Bordeaux, then under English rule), another monk of St. Alban's, of whose life, as of the lives of Trokelowe and others, there is no record, and of whose work there is only a fragment that abruptly ends in the year 1324.*

Henry of Blaneford.

From the St. Alban's book containing these records history was incorporated in Chronicles by the St. Alban's monks, continually busy in their Scriptorium. One was written by William Wyntershylle, who died about the year 1424. These later records were the foundation of Walsingham's "Historia Anglicana," the work in which the successive Chronicles produced by the monks of St. Alban's culminated.

William Wynter-shylle.

The English History of Thomas Walsingham, monk of St. Alban's,† extends from 1272 to 1422, and was first printed in 1574, with the help, if not under the immediate supervision, of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Thomas of Walsingham.

Thomas Walsingham held in St. Alban's Abbey the offices of Precentor and Scriptorarius, or chief copyist, and while he was the chief copyist a new Scriptorium or copying-room was built by Abbot Thomas de la Mare at his suggestion. In 1394 Walsingham was made Prior of the

* Trokelowe's Annals and the Chronicle of Henry of Blaneford are in the Cotton MS. Claudius D vi. They were first edited by Thomas Hearne in 1729. They are included with "Opus Chronicorum," and some later pieces, in a volume of the Chronicles and Memorials edited by Mr. Riley: "Chronica Monasterii St. Albani. Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde, Monachorum S. Albani, necnon quorundam anonymorum Chronica et Annales, regnantibus Henrico Tertio, Edwardo Primo, Edwardo Secundo, Ricardo Secundo, et Henrico Quarto. Edited by Henry Thomas Riley, M.A." (1866).

† MS. Arundel, Coll. Arm. No. vii.

Cell of Wymundham, and so remained till the year 1400, when John Savage became Prior in his stead, and Walsingham probably returned to St. Alban's. Some years afterwards, perhaps about the year 1419, he compiled his "Ypodigma Neustriæ," or Demonstration of Events in Normandy, dedicated to Henry V., in compliment upon his recent conquests in Normandy, but the affairs of Normandy occupy only a small portion of the work. After this time nothing is known of him, Bale's statement that he flourished in 1440 being doubtless an error.

Passing from these St. Alban's annalists, who represent for their own time the best type of a form of literature now near its close, let us turn to a few detached examples of ecclesiastic chronicling.

Robert Avesbury kept the register of the archiepiscopal court at Canterbury. He began a history of the wonderful deeds of the great king of England, the Lord Edward III.,* which carries from the birth of Edward III. in 1313 to 1356 a short detail of public events with simple transcripts of original documents and extracts from letters. As Edward III. lived until 1377, the cessation of the Chronicle in 1356 causes it to be inferred that Robert of Avesbury died then or in 1357. Robert Avesbury.

William Thorn, a Benedictine monk of Canterbury, who was living about 1380, wrote a very full chronicle of events concerning his own abbey, including an historical setting forth of its acquisitions and privileges. William Thorn.

Thomas Stubbs, called also Stobæus, Archbishop of York in 1360, was a Dominican theologian, who wrote a

* "Roberti de Avesbury Historia de Mirabilibus Gestis Edvardi III. Accedunt. 1. Libri Saxonici qui ad manus Joannis Joscelini venerunt. 2. Nomina eorum, qui scripserunt Historiam gentis Anglorum, et ubi extant per Joannem Joscelinum. E Cod. MSS. desc. ediditque Tho. Hearnius, Oxon. 1720."

Chronicle of the Archbishops of York.* He wrote also in Latin, a Shield against the Opponents of Ecclesiastical Statutes; on the Stipends due to Preachers of the Word of God; on the Perfection of the Solitary Life; and on the Art of Dying; himself dying about the year 1373.

Thomas Stubbs.

John of Trevisa, who was vicar of Berkeley, in Gloucestershire, towards the close of the fourteenth century, and chaplain to Thomas Lord Berkeley, made for that nobleman a translation of Higden's "Polichronicon," which is very interesting as an early specimen of English prose. It is said to have been finished in 1387. Trevisa, who died about 1412, was also a translator of other works from Latin into English—even of the Bible, Caxton said; but of an English Bible by Trevisa there is not a trace. He made odd mistakes; and although Higden's Latin is not difficult, found reason for saying, "Though I can speke, rede, and understande Latyn, there is moche Latyn in these books of Cronykes that I can not understande, nether thou, without studyeng, auisement, and lokyng of other bookes."†

John of Trevisa.

* "Chronica Pontificum Ecclesiæ Eboracis," printed by Twysden in "Hist. Ang. Scr. X.," and in Henry Wharton's "Anglia Sacra."

† Caxton printed Trevisa's Higden with the English altered, or, as he said, "a lytel embelysshed fro tholde makyng," with a continuation to 1460. Trevisa's own text was given by Mr. Churchill Babington side by side with the Latin of the "Polichronicon."

CHAPTER X.

WAR AND RELIGION.

WAR poetry had no large place in our literature of the fourteenth century. The chief care of English writers was for the war against lusts of the flesh. They sought to lift men's hearts above the low desires of which attacks upon France were some part of the fruit. One poem in Norman-French, that was meant, in Edward the Third's time, to stir enmity to France by a bold contemporary fable, tells how the young king, Edward III., was in 1338 urged into war with France by Robert of Artois. He, having caught a heron, had it cooked and served ostentatiously at the king's table, as the most cowardly of birds, for the greatest coward there—the king, who tamely bore exclusion from his right to the French crown. Then Robert of Artois presented the heron to the king, and, as was customary, asked his majesty to make a vow upon it. The king vowed to invade France; and in like spirit others followed him with the fierce "Vows of the Heron," after which the piece is named. Thomas Wright, who opened with this piece his collection of "Political Poems and Songs, from the Accession of Edward III. to that of Richard III.,"* added to it a Latin "Invective against

Vows of the Heron.

* In two volumes (1859, 1861) of his Chronicles and Memorials, issued under direction of the Master of the Rolls.

France," with Latin poems on the Battle of Neville's Cross and the Truce of 1347.

But of these French wars Laurence Minot, who wrote in northern dialect, was the English laureate. The MS. of Minot's poems, having "Richard Chawfer" scrawled on a spare leaf, was described as "Chaucer, Exemplar emendate scriptum" in the Catalogue of the Cottonian MSS. printed at Oxford in 1696. To this MS., therefore, which is of the fifteenth century, Thomas Tyrwhitt referred when he was editing the "Canterbury Tales;" and so it was he who, in his "Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer," revived the memory of Laurence Minot. Thomas Warton referred to and quoted him, mistaking, however, Edward Baliol for King Edward III. Edward, elder son of John Baliol, espousing an English cause, won Scotland, and was crowned at Scone in 1332, as vassal to King Edward. He was driven out of Scotland by the Earl of Murray, and then brought the English to lay siege to Berwick, where, at the battle of Halidon Hill—one of the events celebrated in song by Minot—the Scots were beaten in an effort to relieve the town. Berwick surrendered then, and Edward Baliol, regaining his mock rule, again swore fealty to Edward III., but again had to invite English invaders to his rescue. The strife continued; and in 1346, when King Edward was in France besieging Calais, the Scots, under their own King David, retaliated upon England, crossed the border, and advanced as far as Durham. There they were routed with great slaughter, and their king was taken prisoner at the battle of Neville's Cross, the English army being headed, under a commission from the regency, by William de la Zouch, Archbishop of York, Henry de Percy, and Ralph de Neville. As Minot, one of whose poems is a song of triumph on this battle, says that "Edward the Baliolfe" fought in it, Warton considered that to mean Edward the Warlike—that is,

Laurence Minot.

Edward III.—who "is introduced," he says, "by Minot as resisting the Scottish invasion in 1347 [1346] at Nevil's Cross, near Durham."

Laurence Minot's celebration of the victories of Edward III. over the Scots and the French covers the years from the battle of Halidon Hill, in July, 1333, to the capture of Guines Castle, in January, 1352. His war songs were linked together by connecting verses. When he had celebrated the defeat of the Scots at Halidon Hill, which caused the surrender of Berwick, he exulted in his second song over the avenging of Bannockburn; then he celebrated the king's expedition to Brabant, in 1338; proceeded to the first invasion of France; the sea-fight of Sluys or of the Swyne; the siege of Tournai; a song of triumph for the great battle of Crécy, in 1346.

Four more poems complete the series; and of these, which form a little more than a third part of the whole, the subjects are:—

(1) The siege of Calais, begun on the 3rd of September, 1346. King Edward camped about the place to reduce it by famine without assault of artillery. The town held out for more than eleven months, during which King Philip VI. of France—Philip of Valois—failed in his endeavours to relieve it. Calais surrendered unconditionally on the 4th of August, 1347. The well-known story of Queen Philippa's saving of the lives of the six burgesses of Calais who brought the keys of the town we owe to Froissart alone. After the surrender of Calais the town was peopled with English, and belonged to England for the next two hundred and ten years.

(2) The battle of Neville's Cross, fought on the 12th of October, 1346, about a month after King Edward had begun his investment of Calais. The Scots, as they usually did when the King of England was making war in France, had crossed the border; but they were defeated at Neville's

Cross. King David of Scotland remained prisoner in England until 1357, and was so, therefore, when Laurence Minot wrote his war poems.

(3) A victory over the Spaniards who, in the summer of 1350, occupied our seas with forty-four great ships of war, took a revenge for former injuries by spoiling and sinking ten English ships on their way from Gascony, and then went triumphing into Sluys. King Edward gathered a navy of fifty ships and pinnaces to catch the Spanish fleet on its return, and met it at Winchelsea, where, says John Stow, "the great Spanish vessels surmounting our ships and foists, like as castles to cottages, sharply assailed our men; the stones and quarrels flying from the tops sore and cruelly wounded our men, who are no less busy to fight aloof with lance and sword, and with the fore ward manfully defend themselves; at length our archers pierced their arbalisters with a further reach than they could strike again, and thereby compelled them to forsake their place, and caused others fighting from the hatches to shade themselves with tables of the ships, and compelled them that threw stones from the tops so to hide them that they durst not show their heads but tumble down; then our men entering the Spanish vessels with swords and halberds, kill those they meet, within a while making void the vessels, and furnish them with Englishmen, until they, being beset with darkness of the night, could not discern the twenty-seven yet remaining untaken. Our men cast anchor, studying of the hoped battle, supposing nothing finished while anything remained undone, dressing the wounded, throwing the miserable Spaniards into the sea, refreshing themselves with victuals and sleep, yet committing the vigilant watch to the armed band. The night overpassed, the Englishmen prepared (but in vain) to a new battle; but when the sun begun to appear they, viewing the seas, could perceive no sign of resistance; for twenty-seven ships, flying away by

night, left seventeen, spoiled in the evening, to the king's pleasure, but against their will. The king returned into England with victory and triumph; the king preferred there eighty noble imps to the order of knighthood, greatly bewailing the loss of one—to wit, Sir Richard Goldsborough knight."

(4) The taking of Guines Castle, six miles from Calais, by John of Doncaster. John of Doncaster was an English archer among the prisoners of Guines who had no friends to ransom him, and was employed to work at restoration of the castle walls. He became acquainted with a way across the castle ditch by a submerged wall, two feet broad with a break of two feet in the middle, that was used by fishers. John of Doncaster measured the height of the ramparts with a thread, escaped over the ditch to Calais, and there conspired with thirty men, greedy of prey, to get leathern scaling-ladders of the requisite height, advance on the castle under cover of night and in black armour, catch its custodians asleep, and win their prize. This they did one night in January, 1352, in time of truce between England and France, and the town of Guines did not know till next day that its castle had been taken. When the Earl of Guines demanded in whose name it had been attacked and seized in a time of truce, the reply was that it had been taken in the name of John of Doncaster; that although its captors were Englishmen, they were not English subjects, but outlaws, and that they meant to sell their prize. The earl bid high for his castle, but John of Doncaster replied that he preferred to sell it to the King of England; and if the King of England would not buy it, he would sell it to King John of France (who, at the age of thirty-two, had succeeded his father Philip in 1350), or to any who would make a better bid. King Edward bought the castle of its captors; and with a poem upon this adventure Minot ends. If he had lived to see the close of the truce between England and

France, he would surely have added some rhymes on the battle of Poitiers, in September, 1356, when "Sir John of France" was taken prisoner.

We know the name of the writer of these poems from the poems themselves. The poem on the Sea-fight of the Swyne begins—

> "Minot with mowth had menid to make
> Sothe sawes and sad for sum mennes sake."

The poem on Crécy closes its twenty lines of prelude with the line, "Now Laurence Minot will begin." His verse, though arranged with rhymes in strophic form, retains the old way of alliteration that—as the "Vision of Piers Plowman" shows—was still current in songs of the people. His calling may have been that of the scóp or gleeman, modified by course of time; for still in halls of noblemen and in the concourse of the people literature passed from lip to ear. In the rural districts of Northumbria, even at the beginning of the present century, the race of the professional story-tellers was not wholly extinct.*

Minot's verse is fluent; he can expatiate on an old current prophecy and follow the old military fashion of comparing men to beasts, but he has not the imagination

* The only known MS. of Minot's poems is that referred to in the text, Bibl. Cotton. Galba E ix., in the British Museum. They were first printed by Joseph Ritson in 1795, and reprinted in 1825, as "Poems written anno MCCCLII. by Laurence Minot: with Introductory Dissertations on the Scottish Wars of Edward III. on his claim to the throne of France, and Notes and Glossary." Thomas Wright printed Minot's poems in 1859, in the first volume of his "Political Poems and Songs." They were reprinted in 1884 by Wilhelm Scholle, with a minute study of their grammar and metre, in the fifty-second part of "Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach und Culturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, herausgegeben von B. Ten Brink, E. Martin, W. Scherer." There was also a study of the poems published at Halle in 1876, as an Inaugural Dissertation, at Leipzig, by F. J. Bierbaum.

or the insight of a poet, and is an artist only in the mechanism of his verse.

Richard Rolle, known also as the Hermit of Hampole, was born, about the year 1290, at Thornton in Yorkshire. He was sent to school, and from school to Oxford, by Thomas Neville, Archdeacon of Durham, and made great progress in theological studies. At the age of nineteen, mindful of the uncertainty of life, and fearing the temptation to sin, he returned home, and one day told a beloved sister that he had a mighty desire towards two of her gowns, one white, the other grey. Would she bring them to him the next day in a neighbouring wood, and bring with them a hood her father used in rainy weather? When she did so, he took off his own clothes, put on his sister's white dress next his skin, drew over it the grey dress with its sleeves cut off, thrusting his arms through the armholes, hooded himself with his father's rain-hood, and having thus made himself look as much like a hermit as he could, ran away, while his sister cried, "My brother is mad!" He went then, so dressed, on the vigil of the Assumption, into a church, and placed himself where the wife of a Sir John de Dalton used to pray. When Lady de Dalton came with her servants, she would not allow them to disturb the pious young man at his prayers. Her sons, who had studied at Oxford, told her who he was. Next day he assumed, unbidden, the dress of an assistant, and joined in the singing of the service; after which, having obtained the benediction of the priest, he mounted the pulpit, and preached such a sermon that many wept over it and said they had never heard the like before. After mass, Sir John de Dalton invited him to dinner; but he went, because of humility, into a poor old house at the gate of the manor, till he was urged by the knight's own sons to the dinner table. During dinner he maintained a profound silence;

Richard Rolle, the Hermit of Hampole.

but after dinner, Sir John, having talked with him privately, was satisfied of his sanity; he therefore furnished the enthusiast with such hermit's dress as he wished for, gave him a cell to live in, and provided for his daily sustenance. The Hermit of Hampole, thus set up in his chosen vocation, became, while Minot was singing the victories of Edward III., the busiest religious writer of his day. He continued so till 1349, when he died, and was buried in the Cistercian nunnery of Hampole, founded in 1170 by William de Clairefai for fourteen or fifteen nuns, about four miles from Doncaster, near which he had set up his hermit's cell, and which, after his death, derived great profit from his reputation as a saint. He wrote very many religious treatises in Latin and in English, and he turned the Psalms of David into English prose. He is said to have been, when writing, so absorbed in his work that his friends would take his worn clothes from his body, mend them, and put them on again without his knowledge.*

Richard Rolle wrote many prose treatises, and he produced a poem, in 9,624 lines, of "The Prick" (that is, the Goad) "of Conscience" ("Stimulus Conscientiæ"). Its seven parts tell—1. Of the Beginning of Man's Life; 2. Of the Unstableness of this World; 3. Of Death, and why it is to be dreaded; 4. Of Purgatory; 5. Of Doomsday; 6. Of the Pains of Hell; 7. Of the Joys of Heaven.

"The Pricke of Conscience."

This is Richard Rolle's reason for the title he gives to his book:—

> "Þarfor this tretice drawe I wald
> In Inglise tung þat may be cald

* The authority for these details of Richard Rolle's life is a Latin "Officium de Sancto Ricardo heremita," which is in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral, and will be found printed in the preface to a small collection of his English Prose Treatises, made by the Rev. George G. Perry for the Early English Text Society in 1866.

'Prik of Conscience,' als men may fele,
For if a man rede and understande wele
And þe materes þarin til hert wil take,
It may his conscience tendre make;
And til right way of rewel bryng it bilyfe
And his hert til drede and mekenes dryfe,
And til luf, and yhernyng of heven blis,
And to amende alle þat he has done mys."

Mediæval fancies blend with the teaching. Thus the feebleness of man at birth is associated with memories of our first parents :—

"For unnethes es a child born fully
þat it ne begynnes to youle and cry;
And by þat cry men knaw þan
Whether it be man or weman.
For when it es born it cryes swa:
If it be man it says, 'A, a!'
þat þe first letter es of the nam
Of our forme-fader Adam.
And if þe child a woman be,
When it es born it says, 'E, e!'
E es þe first letter and þe hede
Of þe name of Eve that bygan our dede.
þarfor a clerk made on this manere
þis vers of metre that es wroten here:
Dicentes E *vel* A *quotquot nascuntur ab Eva.*
'Alle þas,' he says, 'þat comes of Eve
(þat es al men þat here byhoves leve),
When þai er born what-swa þai be,
þai say outher A, a! or E, e!'"

Upon the pangs associated with the act of death, apart from the sight by the dying of devils eager to snatch the departing soul, Hampole quotes a philosopher who likened man's life to a tree growing as it were through the heart, lapped about with the heartstrings, and the roots striking into every toe and every finger, and said death was as the sudden wrench that tore that tree out of the body, panging

every limb and every nerve. This mediæval teaching was associated with the later dread of death : *

The Pricke of Conscience.

Richard Rolle begins with Commendation of the Trinity, and having sung of God, sings Man in the beginning, middle, and end of his natural life.

The poem abounds in curious particulars of old belief, and is interspersed, not thickly, with Latin citation from Scripture or the fathers.

When he has passed from birth onward to death, the writer tells the signs that prognosticate death or recovery from sickness in an old man and in a young man. If death be near, the young man wakes and cannot sleep; the old man sleeps and cannot wake. He describes the corpse; follows it to the grave, and tells of the loathsomeness of its decay. From man thus destined to fleshly nothingness the preacher-poet turns to the two worlds, the earthly and the spiritual. He discusses each, paints here below the earth, the Macrocosm on which man lives, and man the Microcosm who dwells upon it. He speaks of the peril of love for the world that gives no help in time of need, but is as a sea, a waste, a wood, a battle field, a monster helped by Dame Fortune in fighting with two hands against us; its right hand wealth, its left hand poverty. He speaks of the chances, changes, and varieties of life; preaches against them who call good evil and evil good; tells that there is a spiritual as well as a bodily death, and that God desires not the death of a sinner. He has thus come back to the man's death-bed; but has now to tell, not of its physical aspect, but of the spiritual struggle that goes with it. Death comes at uncertain time, so let men watch for it; while living think of God, and speak of His loving kindness in the gates of the daughter of Zion. Those gates are the Church. Good men do not fear death, holy men desire to die; "Blessed are they that die in the Lord." Then the monk tells, according to the belief of his time, that devils gather about the bed of the dying, of good men as well as bad: that they are grisly, black, and foul, horribly disfigured by sin, which is the cause of their ugliness, and is itself more

* It was in Shakespeare's mind, for example, when he made Anne Boleyn speak of divorce from long use of the pomp of life as

"A sufferance, panging
As soul and body's severing."

horrible than any devil. He paints the future contest for each soul between the devils and the angels.

> "Þai sal dispute Þan of our life,
> With grete discord and grete strife.
> The angels sal reherce the gude,
> And the devels the yvel, with grete mude."

Some souls go straight to Heaven; some through purgatory, of which the least pain is greater than the greatest pain of earth, but where the soul is cleansed of sin and obtains greater reward in heaven. It is under the earth; above the place where unbaptized children dwell, and below the place where our Lord (as described in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus) harrowed Hell. Some say there are two places of Purgatory—a common, under earth; and a special, above it. Of Purgatory there are seven pains: 1, the sight of devils; 2, the soul's doubt; 3, exile; 4, diseases (and he names of them dropsy, gout, ulcers and boils, palsy, quinsy, and leprosy); 5, fire, a pain that may be mitigated by almsdeed, mass, and prayer, and it is worth mitigating—

> "For a spark of Þat fire es mare hate
> Than al Þe fire of erthe, als clerkés wate."

The fire is to burn out sins. The greatest burn in it as wood, the least as stubble, moderate sins as hay. The fire has also to melt the cause of the sixth pain of purgatory, the bands of sin. The seventh and last pain is the absence of all kinds of pleasure.

The preacher tells then of the deadly sins for which penance must be fulfilled either here or there; also of the ten things that destroy a venial sin: 1, holy water; 2, almsdeed; 3, fasting; 4, the sacrament; 5, the Pater Noster; 6, shrift; 7, blessing of the bishop; 8, blessing of the priest; 9, knocking on the breast of a meek man; and 10, anointing of the sick. A list follows of the most common venial sins, and presently the monk tells of the four kinds of help out of purgatory—prayer, almsdeed, fasting, and mass. Richard of Hampole then lays down with unhesitating faith the doctrine of the efficacy of pardon purchased from the popes and bishops who keep the keys of that treasure of the Church, gathered from the merits of Christ's passion, the penance, labour, and death of martyrs and confessors, the teaching of doctors, the chastity of virgins, and the prayers of good priests and clerks.

" Of alle þys, as I shewed by for,
Es gadird* haly kirkes tresor,
Of wilk the Pape the kays bers
Whar-with he bathe opens and spers."†

This church treasure is large enough to release from the pains that may be due to them in Purgatory all the men in Christendom.

There follows a particular account of Doomsday and of Resurrection, when the age of every man shall be that of our Lord in the day of his Crucifixion. After the mediæval notion of Doomsday has been versified, the monk who seeks to prick tough-hided conscience with an ox-goad follows the condemned souls to Hell, of which he details the fourteen general pains:—1, heat; 2, cold; 3, filth and stink; 4, hunger, and men shall tear at their own flesh; 5, thirst, and their drink shall be fire, and for thirst they shall suck at the heads of adders; 6, darkness; 7, sight of devils, so horrible that—

" The hardyest man in flesshe and bane
That here lyfes, yf he sawe ane
Of tha devels in thair awen lyke
Suld wax wode for ferde and be witles;"

8, venomous vermin, that shall live in the fire as fishes in clear water, themselves devils; 9, incessant beating by devils with glowing hammers; 10, gnawing of conscience that bites as vermin; 11, scalding tears, hotter than molten lead, flowing incessantly; 12, shame and disgrace; 13, bonds of fire, in which the wicked shall be chained with their heads down and their feet up; and, 14, at the end of all, despair, while the tormented scratch the faces of each other among the roaring and the yelling of the devils.

The preacher having dilated on these mediæval fancies, and done his best to push them as a goad into the sinner's conscience, turns then from hell to heaven, and ascends by way of the seven planets and the stars, telling astronomical facts as crude as those of his theology. He goes through the starry and the crystalline or watery heaven to the third or highest heaven, which—

" Ne moves noght als dose the other twa.
But stands ay stille, for it is best.
And þe most worthi place of pees and rest."

* Is gathered. † Locks.

Here he supplies a catalogue of joys of heaven, to which he adds the seven blisses and their contraries, arranging his story so that a reminder of the mediæval Hell follows each point in the description of the mediæval Heaven. The blisses are—1, brightness; 2, swiftness; 3, strength; 4, freedom; 5, health; 6, perfect joy; and, 7, everlasting life. Then follow the seven spiritual blessings and their contraries; the poem passing after this into the monk's picture of Heaven and the Heavenly city, transformed suddenly into a fresh reminder of the noise and stink and other pains of hell. Richard of Hampole ends by representing the purpose of his poem and those for whom it has been thus written. He excuses himself for bad rhyming—

> "For I rek noght þogh tho ryme be rude,
> If the matters þar-of be gude."

And at the last he begs—

> "Yhe þat has herd þis tretice red
> That now es brought til ende and sped,
> For the luf of our Louerd Jhesu
> Pray for hym specially þat it dru."

Here, then, we are able to see fairly, in the mind of an honest and religious monk, who wrote in the next generation after Dante, that body of mediæval doctrine against which, in some of its parts, and especially its claim of power to the Pope or his delegates to trade in pardon of the pains of purgatory, the most vigorous protest of the English mind was already arising.

Some of Richard Rolle's prose treatises were printed in 1866 by the Rev. George G. Perry, Prebendary of Lincoln, from a collection now in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral, of Poems, Tracts, Prayers, and Medical Receipts, made by Robert Thornton, Archdeacon of Bedford in the earlier half of the fifteenth century. In Robert Thornton's time pilgrims came to the shrine of Richard Rolle in the priory of Hampole, where all his many works were to be seen chained to desks. Though an enthusiast who said that in the intensity of

Prose Treatises.

devotion he felt within him an actual physical heat and burning—which he regarded as a spiritual glow making itself felt by the body, because of its excessive strength—his enthusiasm caused him to travel to and fro, as well as write, for the help of men. In his distinction between the two forms of life—the contemplative and the active—to one of which every man who would find heaven must honestly devote himself, he was clearly practical. The active life, he said, "lieth in love and charity showed outward by good bodily works, in fulfilling of God's commandments, and of the seven deeds of mercy, bodily and ghostly, to a man's even-Christian. This life longs to all worldly men which have richesse and plenty of worldly good; and also to all other men that have goods for to spend, learned or lewed, temporal or spiritual; and generally all worldly men ben bounden to fulfil it by their might and their cunning, their reason and discretion. If he much have, much do; if he a little have, little or less do; and if he nought have, that he have then a good will."*

* There are ten MSS. of Hampole's "Pricke of Conscience" in the British Museum. The poem was reprinted by Dr. Richard Morris in 1863, for the Philological Society, chiefly from the MS. in Bibl. Cotton. Galba E ix., which contains also Laurence Minot's Poems, with other pieces of Old Northumbrian, including Ywaine and Gawaine, the Seven Sages, and the Gospel of Nicodemus. "The Pricke of Conscience" ("Stimulus Conscientiæ"). A Northumbrian Poem, by Richard Rolle de Hampole. Copied and edited from MSS. in the Library of the British Museum. The short prose treatises edited by Mr. Perry (see page 269) are on "The Virtues of the Holy Name of Jesus;" a tale that Richard Hermit made (of a fiend who, when he was young, tempted him in the shape of a fair woman); a dreadful tale of imperfect contrition (really two tales, one of a canon of Paris who was damned for imperfect shrift, the other of a scholar of Paris whose sins were so great that he dreaded to write them, but in full repentance wrote them all. The prior to whom he brought them was confounded, and could say nothing till he had shown them to an abbot. When the paper was shown to the abbot it was blank, because through full

In southern English—in the dialect of Kent—Dan Michel of Northgate, a brother of the cloister of St. Austin at Canterbury, completed, as its MS. says, "in þe yeare of oure lhordes beringe, 1340," a close translation of a French religious book, "La Somme des Vices et des Vertus," originally written in the year 1279, by his confessor, the Dominican Frère Lorens (Latinised, Laurentius Gallus, Laurence of France), for the King of France, Philip the Third, who ruled from 1270 to 1285. The original book is, therefore, known also as "Li Libres Royaux des Vices et des Vertus," or as "La Somme le Roi;" it has been also called "Le Miroir du Monde," and "Le Livre des Commandemens." It was translated into many languages. We shall find Chaucer using a part of it in his "Persones Tale." After Dan Michel's Kentish word-for-word version of the book as the "Again-bite (Remorse) of Inwyt" (Conscience)—a version so close that it often follows French construction of a sentence—there was another version made in midland dialect about the year

The "Ayen-bite of Inwyt."

repentance God had blotted the sins out). There are also very short Treatises of the Ten Commandments; of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; of the Delight and Yearning towards God; of the Union of God with Man's Soul; of the Active and the Contemplative Life; and of the Mixed Life of Holy Bishops. In the seventh volume of "Englische Studien" there is a paper of "Studien zu Richard Rolle de Hampole," by J. Ullmann, of Breslau. It gives from a MS. in the University Library of Cambridge two English pieces, which the writer of the MS. ascribed to Richard Rolle: one is a prose meditation on the Passion of Christ, the other a poem entitled "Speculum Vitæ," of which the first 370 lines are included in the paper, which contains also a minute study of the language of these pieces. There are also in the eighth volume of "Englische Studien," pages 67 to 114, Hampole studies by G. Kribel. On the Paraphrase of the Seven Penitential Psalms, ascribed to Richard Rolle, there was a Dissertation published by Max Adler at Breslau in 1885, "Ueber die Richard Rolle de Hampole zugeschriebene Paraphrase der sieben Busspsalmen."

1400,* and another printed by Caxton, with a preface dated in 1484, as "The Royal Book; or, A Book for a King." † The substance of the book sets forth—first, the Ten Commandments; then the Apostles' Creed as the Twelve Articles of Christian belief, written—one apiece—by the twelve Apostles; then the Seven Deadly Sins as the Seven Heads of the Beast that came out of the Sea with Seven Heads and Ten Horns. Then follow the Ten Sins of the Tongue, and Expositions of the Learning to Die; the Distinctions between Good and Evil; the Seven Petitions of the Pater Noster; the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost; Wherefore Man is Saved; the Three First Virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity); the Four Cardinal Virtues and their Office, and of the other Virtues. Other topics that follow are Repentance, Shrift, Penance, the Seven Steps of the Tree of Mercy; Almsgiving; Chastity, treated at length; the Gift of Wisdom; the Seven Steps of Sobriety; and a sermon upon the 43rd verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, with enforcement of the difference between men and beasts, and a final hail to Mary, maid and mother, blessed among women.

* Brit. Mus., Additional MS. 17013. Addit. MS. 22283 has a version of six of the commandments (the other four not being in the MS.) and of the twelve articles of belief in different form and more elaborated.

† The "Ayenbite of Inwit" was first printed in 1855 from its autograph MS. in the British Museum (Arundel 57), by the Rev. Joseph Stevenson, to whom Mr. E. A. Bond, then keeper of the MSS., pointed out that it was a translation, referring to a MS. of the original, which is also in the British Museum, Cotton MS. Cleopatra A v. In 1866 Dr. Richard Morris re-edited the book for the Early English Text Society, "Dan Michel's Ayenbite of Inwyt; or, Remorse of Conscience. In the Kentish dialect, edited from the unique MS. in the British Museum." To this volume Dr. Morris, who first laid in this country the foundations of an enlarged study of dialect, prefixed a valuable introduction on old Kentish grammar. In vol. i. of "Englische Studien" (1877) there are two valuable articles by Hermann Varnhagen (pp. 379–423) on the "Ayenbite of Inwyt," "Beiträge zur Erklärung und Text kritik," which no student of the work should overlook.

The earliest translator into prose of the Psalms of David —the only book of which the Church allowed translation into the vernacular—was William of Shoreham, who wrote in the Kentish dialect. He was born in the Kentish parish of Shoreham, five miles from Sevenoaks. He was sent from the priory of Leeds to be rector of Chart-Sutton in Kent, when the Archbishop of Canterbury—Walter Reynolds, who died in 1327—gave the Leeds priory his presentation. William of Shoreham wrote poems of his own on the Seven Sacraments and Seven Deadly Sins, and in argument for the principles of Christian doctrine.* William of Shoreham.

In a MS. of "The Pricke of Conscience" is a northern metrical version of the Legend of Theophilus in dialect like Richard Rolle's, but with a vocabulary that indicates different authorship. There is a southern metrical version of the same legend in the Vernon MS. "Sawlhele," which contains one of the texts of the "Vision of Piers Plowman." The story first appeared in Greek, as supposed to be told by Eutychianus "famulus et comes" to Theophilus. Versions of this were sources of other versions in various languages, and it became the subject of one of the earliest dramas in Low German. Theophilus.

Theophilus

was clerk to a bishop in Sicily whom he served truly and well. The bishop gave him land and gold, and all good men were his friends. He clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and was loved by the poor for his almsdeed. The bishop died. Theophilus was all the hope "of lered

* The MS. is in the Brit. Mus., Add. MS. 17376. It was edited in 1849 for the Percy Society by Thomas Wright. Errors of this edition have been corrected in some passages of extract quoted severally by Mätzner, Morris, and Wülcker; and a complete revision of Wright's text was published in 1878 by Dr. M. Konrath ("Beiträge zur Erklärung und Text kritik des William von Schorham.")

and of lewd," and they chose him for bishop. But the Fiend was envious, and made his heart so hard that he would not grant their asking. "I am not worthy," he said. "Get another man." The people were displeased. They still urged him in vain; and at last brought Theophilus before the Archbishop, who could compel him to grant their prayer. Theophilus fell weeping at the Archbishop's feet. "Spare me," he said, "I pray thee. I am a sinful man, who can do little good." The Archbishop gave him three days to consider.

Bot evere his herte was in o state
Ffor woldé he not be preláte.

Then the Archbishop made another man a bishop, who retained Theophilus in his service. But the Fiend caused Theophilus to be belied, and ill to be thought of him, so that he was thrust out of his office, he knew not why. He still lived in his own house fairly and courteously, received guests, and gave alms.

Then Sathanas gathered new guiles against Theophilus, and made him spend till all his goods were gone, and he had no longer the respect of men. His joy was gone, and he bethought him how he might regain his office—

"Þorwh wicchécraft and sorcerye
Þat clerkes clepen nigramauncie."

There lived in that city a Jew who had become the devil's man,

"wiþ wicchécraft and sorcerye
to lede his lyf ful priuelye."

Theophilus thought of this Jew, knocked one night at his gate without ceasing till the Jew admitted him. He told his tale, asked help, and was bidden to return at the same time next day. He did so, and was led up to a hill, where he was bidden to fear nothing of what he saw or heard, but take heed that he did not make on himself the sign of the cross—

"ne þenk on Crist ne on Marie,
but cum wiþ me ful boldelye.
I schal þe ledé to my kyng,
þat schal folfullé þi longyng."

Theophilus agreed to this. He saw on the hill many in rich attire surrounding a proud king, before whom the Jew set him on his knees.

The king asked the Jew why he had brought Theophilus. The Jew told the king why Theophilus had come to be his man for evermore. The devil made great promise of earthly fortune to Theophilus, on condition that he first forsook Jesus and Mary his mother :—

" þerfore ȝif he him forsake,
and aftur omage to me make,
þen wol I make him mi knight,
and socoure him wiþ al mi miht ;
and þat schal he to morwe se,
and for his Lord holdé me :
ffor to morwe, or hit beo non,
he schal ben in his bayli don.
When þat Teophele herdé þis,
him þhouhte he heddé muché blis,
and þonked þe fend of his bihete,
and fel on knes and custe his feete,
and saide : 'I wol bycome þi mon
wiþ al þe wit þat now I con ;
ffor Christe and Marie I forsake,
and to þe, lord, I me take.
At þat word les he godes gras,
and into him eode Sathanas.*
þar saide þe fend unto him tyte,
'Conferme þi covenant wiþ a scrite,
So þat we both may hold us paid,
And þat oure wordes be noght gainsaid.' "

Theophilus sat on the ground and wrote, and sealed with his own ring what he had written. Then he went home, a glad man, to his house in the city.

The bishop dreamt that night, and it seemed to him that he had done amiss. So he sent in the morning for Theophilus and restored him to his office. All bowed to him again ; and he gave right judgment ; and he never before was half as prosperous.

The Jew who had helped him often came to remind whence he had his help, and warn him to be prudent. Let him forsake Paternoster and Creed, forget Mary—it would have been long ere she so helped him—

* "He lost God's grace and Satan went into him." In the next lines "tyte," promptly ; "scrite," writing ; paid, pacatus, satisfied.

"And luke þou do no almésdede,
bot pray oure king þat he þe spede."

Theophilus was well content. He prospered still, and served the Fiend with all his might.

But Jesus Christ in pity made him see in his heart what he had done, and how he was caught in the devil's net. When this had been shown to Theophilus in a vision, he sorely lamented; he knew not whither to fly; but he felt that the mercy of Jesus is above all his works. And blessed, says the poet, is the Maid Mary, ever ready in our need. Theophilus thought of her in all his woe, and knew her always ready to pray to her son. He ran as a madman to her chapel, and kneeled before her, and prayed earnestly, with weeping, for forty days. She pitied him, because he had resolved in his heart to make amends, and never to do ill from that time. She came to him after the forty days, when he slept in great sorrow and weeping. She asked why he called on her so earnestly. If he were worthy, he might have his prayer. But how should she pray to her son? He had forsaken her and him, and served their foe, the Fiend, which was a great outrage. He had her whole forgiveness. Her son was not less pitiful; but he was righteous, and must be a righteous judge.

Then Theophilus feared in his heart, but saw that he must answer. He pleaded that David had been forgiven for the murder of Uriah, with manslaughter and adultery. He pleaded that Christ had pity for the Magdalene, and that he hoped, by Mary's help, to find heal for his sorrow—

"Wel I wot, þi sone bouhte me
Al so dere as he dude þe."

Had there been no sin, thou wouldst not have been God's mother in Heaven. It seems to me that I may try

"to preyé þat þu bere myn ernde*
to þi sone for mi misdede,
þat tok for vs in þe monhede."

Mary replied to Theophilus then, where they were locked up in the church, that he seemed to know something of her and her son. She loved mankind so well that she would try to cool his care. But, before this could be done, he must be sure of a good life to come, and must with his mouth renounce the Fiend and acknowledge her son to

* Errand.

be God, who descended into hell and took from the Fiend his prey, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven, where he reigns almighty, who created all things out of nought, and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead. All this, he said, he believed; and then he slept, and our Lady departed. And he awoke, and knelt three days, without food, where he had seen the vision. In the third night our Lady came to him in a beam of light, and said she had obtained for him the grant that he should be the servant of her Son; but he must take heed against more falling into sin. Theophilus blessed her as the Lady ever ready to hear those who call; but he prayed now to get back the writing he had signed, for without it he might be held to his bond. Our Lady vanished, and he prayed again for three days on the spot where she had left him. And our Lady went, with angels, to the Fiend, and took from him the writing, and brought it to Theophilus as he was sleeping, and laid it on his breast. And when he awoke he leapt for joy that he was wholly delivered.

The next morning was Sunday, when the people went to church to hear mass and to pray. The bishop came to lead the service. Theophilus came running with the writing in his hand. When the bishop was passing to his sermon, Theophilus fell weeping at his feet, and told his story. He told it aloud that all might hear, and caused the writing to be read and shown; and the bishop afterwards preached from it in the pulpit, and taught the people from this instance what great sins may be atoned by shrift, penance, and prayer. Let not him despair who calls on the mild Queen and does right penance for his sin. Glad may they be who have such an attorney in Heaven to plead for them before the Trinity.

> "When he hed said þis and mare,
> He let brenné the scrit þare
> þat Teophile made of couenaunt
> When he bicom þe develes servaunt."

The rejoicing people thanked God and our Lady. After the sermon the bishop went to the celebration of the mass, and Theophilus received the Sacrament of the Body and the Blood of Christ. And it was seen that he received it worthily, for his face shone like the summer sun, and none could look upon its light, and the people all loved God when they had seen that miracle. Theophilus then went home and yielded up his trust and his great office, and for the love of Christ who bought him on the cross gave all his lands and treasure to the poor, and had Christ only, and had no care for himself.

And he went to dwell and ever dwelt where he had seen our Lady, until God sent him sickness. Till the third day he lay sick and suffering, and then he called religious men about him, and he kissed all of them before he let his eyelids fall and went to the bliss of Heaven to take meed for his travail.

This old tale of the efficacy of repentance, which has come down to us both in northern and in southern English,* has been called the Faust story of the Middle Ages. It associates again the Virgin with the attribute of divine mercy and love that made her worship in the Middle Ages full of comfort to the poor, embodiment in womanhood of the chief attribute of God himself, then chiefly feared as an Avenger sternly just.

* The northern and the southern versions have been given in parallel columns by Dr. Eugen Kölbing in the first volume of his "Englische Studien" (pages 16–57). There was a French version made by Gauthièr de Coinsy, Prior of the Cloister at Vic-Sur-Aine, who died in 1236. There were two Icelandic versions in prose. It is found in Middle High German. The Middle-Netherlandish version, (made in the fourteenth century) of this poem, which was one of the most popular works of the Middle Ages, was last edited at Amsterdam in 1882, "Theophilus, Middelnederlandsch Gedicht der xivde eeuw op nieuw uitgegeven door Dr. J. Verdam, Hoogleerar te Amsterdam." The Low German play of "Theophilus" was first edited at Hanover in 1853, from a MS. of the fifteenth century at Treves, by Hoffman von Fallersleben. The play, though short, was represented by many characters—a messenger, eighteen persons of different grade in the chapter of the Bishop's church, including the Bishop and Theophilus, five Jews, a servant to Theophilus, Satan, and Lucifer. These all appeared in the first of three parts into which the story was divided. The second part is lost. A translation into German of a Westphalian version of a play of Theophilus, acted in one of the coast towns at the beginning of the fifteenth century, has been just published, with a full introduction on the Theophilus legend: "Theophilus. Das Faust-Drama des deutschen Mittelalters übersetzt und mit einer erläuternden Einleitung verschen von Johannes Wedde" (Hamburg, 1888).

CHAPTER XI.

MAUNDEVILLE'S TRAVELS.

THE author of a famous book describes himself as Sir John Maundeville, born at St. Albans, and says that it was in the reign of Edward II., on Michaelmas Day, 1322, that he set out upon travels. Five years later, when Edward III. became king, Sir John Maundeville was still abroad. He tells us that he visited Tartary, Persia, Armenia, Lybia, Chaldea, and a great part of Ethiopia, Amazonia, India the Less and the Greater, and isles that are about India. For more than thirty years he had been absent, when he came home, as he said, in spite of himself, to rest; "for rheumatic gouts that distress me fix the end of my labour against my will (God knoweth)." On his way home he says he showed to the Pope—Innocent VI.—what he had written in Latin about the marvels and customs he had seen or heard of. The Pope showed the book to his council, and it was approved. After his return Sir John Maundeville employed his forced leisure in turning his Latin book into French, and then again into English. This he did in 1356, thirty-four years after he had sailed from England. Some MSS. make him a traveller from 1332 to 1366. But it has been made evident from a comparison of texts that the book was first written in French, and that the English version of Maundeville's Travels is a translation from the French. The statement that he wrote it himself must be regarded as

Sir John Maundeville

interpolation by another hand. If he did translate his book into English it is not his own version that we have, since that, while it is a most valuable piece of early English prose, contains such mistranslations of the French as could not have been made by the author himself, who knew what he had written. The book had a wide popularity. Besides the Latin, French, and English versions, there were translations of it into Italian, German, Flemish, and in the Library at Rennes there is even a MS. of it in Irish Celtic.

His Travels.

Maundeville's book was planned with reference to the wants of pilgrims to Jerusalem, and contrived to subordinate accounts of remote travel to the form of what we might call a Guide to Jerusalem by four routes, with a Handbook to the Holy Places. The wonderful things told do not in themselves convict the author of any wilful untruth. He tells of what was seen by him as matter of knowledge; in the miracles narrated to him he put faith; and all other marvels of which he heard he tells only as matter of hearsay. He says that he and his men served the Sultan of Babylon in war against the Bedouins, and had from him letters which gave admission to the least accessible of the Holy Places at Jerusalem. He says also that for fifteen months he and his men served the Great Khan of the Tartars of Cathay (China).

But if Sir John Maundeville visited Cathay and India, and wrote from his own knowledge of what he saw there, he must then have had for a travelling companion a Lombard Franciscan friar, Odoric of Pordenone, in Friuli. Odoric was about fourteen years older than Maundeville, and he started on his travels about five years earlier, remaining absent until 1330. He was in Western India soon after 1321, and spent three of the years between 1322 and 1328 in Northern China. In much of his travel he had an Irish friar for companion. On his return to Italy, in 1330, Odoric

told the story of his travels, and it was set down in Latin by a brother of his Order. He died in the following year. The resemblance between the narratives of Odoric and Maundeville concerning travel in the far East is so very close that the two men have been spoken of as travelling companions. Maundeville, in describing the Perilous Valley, says that he had with him "two worthy men, friars of Lombardy, who said if any man would enter they would go in with us." Sir John Maundeville's Travels were written more than twenty years later than Odoric's, and it is in the resemblances between these two books that we find most reason to doubt Sir John's veracity. It is not unreasonable to ask whether he saw more of Cathay or India than he found upon the pages of the Lombard friar.*

It was first shown by Carl Gottlob Schönborn, in 1840,† that the Latin version of the Travels was another man's abridged and corrupt translation from the French. One of the two independent English versions, which, from the statement made in a Cotton MS.,‡ and nowhere else, is ascribed to Maundeville's own hand, speaks of the "Circle of the Swannes in heaven," meaning "signs," by a confusion in reading "cygnes" for "signes." This was first observed by Eduard Mätzner;§ and Mr. E. B. Nicholson, who has long contemplated a critical edition of Maundeville, has made note of many similar misreadings, which would have been

* "Cathay and the Way Thither; being a Collection of Mediæval Notices of China, translated and edited by Colonel Henry Yule, C.B., with a Preliminary Essay on the Intercourse between China and the Western Nations previous to the Discovery of the Cape Route." Two vols. (Hakluyt Society, 1866). In the first volume Colonel Yule gives a translation fully annotated of the Travels of Friar Odoric.

† Bibliographische Untersuchungen über die Reisebeschreibung des Sir John Maundeville, pp. 24, 4to (Breslau, 1840).

‡ Titus C xvi.

§ "Altenglische Sprachproben" (Berlin, 1867), pp. 152-155.

wholly impossible if Maundeville had been his own translator.

There seems to be no reason for questioning the authenticity of Maundeville's book, but very great reason for considering it to have been based partly upon actual experience, partly upon compilation from records of other men who had been about in the world. The object was to make a book of travels in which, for unity of plan, the Holy Places of Jerusalem should be approached from different directions, and the record of what was to be seen should be made full, lively, and interesting. Obviously, also, the information given would be received most easily and pleasantly if it were associated throughout with the movements of a single traveller. In all forms of instruction writers then incorporated the experiences and thoughts of their predecessors, and repeated thoughts or facts without much regard for the claims of the men by whom they were first uttered or discovered. What should we think now of a Dan Michel who issued an "Ayenbite of Inwit" as a book for the English people without mentioning that it was translated from the French? Remembering the difference of times, and that in a tale of travel there must be a traveller, who will excite most interest when he speaks in his own person, we need not reproach Sir John Maundeville—who is but a name—for eking out his own experience with the experiences of other men when he made a travel book for general instruction and delight.

Are they true?

Mr. Edward Byron Nicholson, now librarian of the Bodleian, who has proved that Maundeville's Travels were first written in French, and Colonel Yule, who has traced most of the borrowed narratives in Maundeville to their originals, have joined in writing a valuable study of the subject for the ninth edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica."* Here it is observed that Maundeville, except

* Vol. xv., 1883.

one fact about Ormus, has made no use of the famous travels of the Venetian, Marco Polo, who, as a young man of twenty-one, in company with his father and uncle, first reached the court of Kubla Khan in the year 1275, and who died in the year 1324, three years before Maundeville began his travels. But it is shown that, besides its use of the Travels of Odoric, Maundeville's book contains information about Asiatic history and geography, from a book dictated in French, at Poitiers, in the year 1307, by Hayton, a monk of the Præmonstrants, who was an Armenian of princely family. About the customs of the Tartars there is information drawn from the book of the Franciscan, John de Plano Carpini, one of the embassy sent in the time of the Emperor Frederick II. from Pope Innocent IV., to seek to divert, if possible, the attacks of the descendants of Genghis Khan from the Christians to the Saracen Turks. Maundeville's account of Prester John was taken from the Epistle ascribed to him, and current beliefs about him in the thirteenth century. It is pointed out also that in Maundeville's Travels frequent use has been made of the itinerary of a German knight, William of Boldensele, written in 1336, at the desire of Cardinal Talleyrand de Perigord; and that sometimes he spoils what he takes, sometimes, as, in description of the Bedouins, he expands it accurately with knowledge that seems to have been really obtained on the spot.

The earliest known MS. of Maundeville's Travels is in French, and dated 1371.* The English version was made by an unknown translator, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, from a defective copy of the French original. It was† completed and revised by two independent

* The Earl of Ashburnham's MS., lib. xxiv.

† Here I quote Nicholson and Yule from the "Encyclopædia Britannica."

editors, neither of them later than the first quarter of the fifteenth century.*

Whoever the translator was, and whatever the mistakes he made in his translation, he certainly added to our literature the most entertaining book written in Early English prose.†

* One of these revisions is represented by the British Museum MS., Egerton, 1982, and the very badly abbreviated Bodleian MS. E., Mus. 116. The other is represented by the British Museum MS. E., Mus. 116.

† An edition of the text of Maundeville's Travels was published in 1725 based on the Cotton MS. Titus C xvi. collated with two English MSS., two French, and one Latin in the Royal Library, a Latin MS. in the Cotton Library, and an English MS. in a private collection. It was collated also with four printed versions, an Italian of 1537, an English of 1568, a Latin of 1598, and an undated Latin version. Some of these differed so much that they almost looked like separate works. The text of this 1725 edition was reprinted in 1839 as "The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville, Kt., which treateth of the way to Hierusalem; and of Marvayles of Inde, with other Ilandes and Countryes." This was edited with a valuable Introduction by John Orchard Halliwell (now Halliwell-Phillipps) who said that he knew no book except the Bible of which there are so many MSS. The widespread interest in the book is shown by Titus Tobler in "Bibliographia Geographia Palæstinæ" (Leipzig, 1867). There was a version even into Bohemian. Maundeville's Travels have been reprinted in a volume of Bohn's Libraries, with Sæwulf and other records of early travellers to Palestine.

CHAPTER XII.

WILLIAM LANGLAND AND HIS "VISION OF PIERS PLOWMAN."

WILLIAM LANGLAND was essentially a poet of the English people. He is said, in a handwriting of the fifteenth century upon one of the MSS. of his poem, to have been born in Oxfordshire, at Shipton-under-Wychwood, the son of a freeman named Stacy de Rokayle, who lived there as a tenant under Lord le Spenser. On another MS. the author of the poem is named William W., possibly William of Wychwood (?). John Bale, in the middle of the sixteenth century, made the poet's Christian name Robert, wherein certainly he erred; and said that he was born at Cleobury Mortimer, in Shropshire, wherein, perhaps, he erred also. The poet is called "Willelmus" on titles or colophons of many MSS. He calls himself Wille in the text, and in one place seems to write the syllables of his whole name backwards in naming himself: "I have lyved in *lond*, quod I: my name is *Longe Wille*." The opening of his poem leads us to infer that William Langland was bred to the Church, and was attached at one time to the monastery of Great Malvern. But he married, and seems only to have performed minor offices of the Church. The forty-three remaining MSS. of his great poem represent it, with many variations, in three well-defined stages of completeness, indicating that throughout his life the author was extending and enriching it. In the portion

William Langland

first written there are references to the Treaty of Bretigny, in 1360, to the great pestilence of 1361, and to a great storm which occurred in the evening of Saturday, January 15th, 1362. The work must, therefore, have been begun about that time. In the later continuation of the poem there is reference to a day in April, in 1370, and to the accession of Richard II., in 1377. It has been assumed that in this part of the poem Langland calls his age forty-five; if so, he was not born earlier than 1332. But we shall note, when we describe this passage in its context, that the age given belongs to the allegory, and is not necessarily to be read as the statement of a personal fact. He came to London, for in the latest continuation of the poem he speaks of himself as living poorly in Cornhill by the performance of small clerical duties. If Langland was the author of a poem on the "Deposition of Richard II.," which Professor Skeat has for sound reasons ascribed to him, he was alive in 1399.

Langland's vision was first represented as occurring to him while he slept from time to time on Malvern Hills. The opening lines may be variously interpreted:—

> "In a somer seson whan soft was the sonne
> I shope me in shroudes as I a shepe were,
> In habit as an heremite unholy of workes,
> Went wyde in this world wondres to here."

"Shepe" here is said to mean, as it can mean, shepherd, and William is supposed to have put on a shepherd's dress which resembled that of a hermit. Hermit "unholy of works" was paraphrased by Dr. Whitaker as meaning "not like an anchorite who keeps his cell, but like one of those unholy hermits who wander about the world to see and hear wonders," and some such sense of depreciation is usually given to the phrase. I think that "shepe" means sheep, as the opposite to shepherd;

and that William on a summer's day put off the clerical dress that marked his place among the pastors, made himself as one of the flock, in habit of a heremite, a man given to contemplation in the wilderness—for Malvern Hills were then a famous wilderness, and so to William's mind was the wide world. He took the form of a man devoting himself to lonely thought, who was "unholy of works," because he made himself as one of the flock, not of the pastors, thinking and feeling as one of the people of England, and as if he were not vowed to the sole contemplation of God. I do not suppose "unholy" to have any bad sense, but to mean only that William made himself, for the purpose of the poem, as one of the people, and put aside for a time his work as of one in holy orders. That he was incorporated in some way with the great religious house at Malvern is made the more probable by the account he gave in later life of his means of subsistence when living in Cornhill with Kit his wife :—

> "And ich lyue in London and on London both
> The lomes* that ich laboure with and lyflode† deserve
> Ys *Pater-noster* and my prymer, *placebo* and *dirige*,
> And my sauter som tyme and my seuene psalmes.
> Thus ich synge for hure soules of suche as me helpen
> And tho‡ that fynden me my fode."

The freedom with which William Langland entered into the new spirit of reformation stayed, no doubt, his advancement in the Church. Such a man, as a married priest with a wife Kit and Calot a daughter—in whose workaday names there may or may not have been such convenient alliteration—might live in London and on London by the help of

* *Lomes*, utensils. First-English "lóma" and "gelóma," "household stuff, utensils, furniture, stock, store.

† *Lyflode* (First-English, "liflâde"), maintenance, livelihood.

‡ *Tho*, those.

those who shared his aspirations and could lighten the burden of his daily life; but he had entirely turned his back upon the race for Church preferment, and had, indeed, in the eyes of the Church superiors, "shope himself in shroudes as he a shepe were, in habit as an heremite unholy of workes." He had gone out into the wilderness that he might tell us of the solemn voices that he heard through all the noise and babble of the world.

"The Vision of Piers Plowman."

Langland's poem was the voice of his whole life. He began it about the year 1362, when he was, probably, not older than thirty. He was thoroughly revising it about the year 1377, and he continued to revise and enlarge it during the next twenty years. The numerous MSS. which attest the great popularity of the poem represent it in three forms, corresponding to these stages of its development—first in eleven passus, or divisions; then in twenty; then in twenty-three. It was from a MS. of the second form that Robert Crowley, dwelling in Ely Rents, in Holborn (he was vicar of St. Giles's, Cripplegate), first printed "The Vision of Piers Plowman," in 1550, in a quarto volume of 250 pages. It was published to assist, by its true voice, the great effort made towards reformation in the reign of Edward VI., and so heartily welcomed that there were three editions of the poem at this date. It was again printed by Reginald Wolfe in 1553; and after the interval of Mary's reign, again by Owen Rogers in 1561. But Langland's work was known to very few when, in 1813, Dr. Thomas Dunham Whitaker printed an edition of it from a MS. of the third and latest type. It was edited again by Mr. Thomas Wright in 1842 and 1856, the latter edition being a most convenient and accessible one, forming two volumes of a "Library of Old English Authors."* Mr. Wright's edition was from a MS. giving a form of the poem similar to that published by Robert Crowley; and in 1867,

* It was reprinted in 1887.

1869, and 1873, each of the three forms of the MSS. of "Piers Plowman" was represented, with collation of all the best of the three dozen MS. texts, in editions prepared by the Cambridge Professor of Anglo-Saxon, the Rev. W. W. Skeat, for the Early-English Text Society. Notes, Introduction, and Indexes followed in 1877 and 1885; and in 1887 an incorporation of the whole results of twenty years of study in a Library Edition that gives all forms of the work.*

The Vision of Piers Plowman.

Wandering over Malvern Hills on a May morning, William became weary. He lay down and slept upon the grass. Then he saw in a dream—first of the series of dreams that form his Vision—"all the wealth of this world, and the woe both." Between the sunrise, where rose in the east the Tower of Truth, and the sunset, where Death dwelt in a deep dale,

> "A fair feeld ful of folk fond I ther betwene,
> All manere of men, the meenè and the riche,
> Werchynge and wandrynge as the world asketh."

Professor Skeat's work upon Langland's great poem is singularly thorough. He publishes, with a special introduction, each of its three forms separately, from collation of the MSS., with various readings and reference to the MS. containing each. A fourth section is assigned to the General Introduction, Notes, and Index. Besides this work on the whole poem, Prof. Skeat has contributed to the Clarendon Press Series the first seven passus—"The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman, by William Langland, according to the version revised and enlarged by the author about A.D. 1377," with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary, as an aid to the right study of Early English in colleges and schools, and also as a most efficient guide to the reading of the whole poem by those to whom its English, without such help, would be obscure. Prof. Skeat produced also in 1887 a handsome library edition in two volumes of the three texts with introduction and a full body of notes, which may be regarded as the standard edition of this work by the scholar whose thorough study of the poem from all points of view makes him our chief authority in any question concerning it.

Some put themselves to the plough, took little rest, and earned that which the wasters destroy by their gluttony. Some put themselves to pride, and clothed themselves thereafter in many a guise. Many put themselves to prayer and penance, living hard lives for the love of our Lord, in hope to have a good end, and bliss in heaven. Some lived by trade; and some by minstrelsy, avoiding labour, swearing great oaths, and inventors of foul fancies, making themselves fools, though they have wit at will to work if they would. Beggars were there with full bags, brawling and gluttonous; pilgrims and palmers who went to St. James of Compostella and the saints of Rome, and had leave to tell lies all their lives after. Long lubbers made pilgrimages to our Lady of Walsingham,* clothed themselves in copes to be known from other men, ''

> " And shopen hem hermits, hire ese to have.
> I fond there Freres, alle the foure ordres,†
> Prechynge the peple for profit of the wam ‡
> And glosing § the Gospel as hem good liked.
> . . . . . .

* *Our Lady of Walsingham.* The shrine of the Virgin Mary in the monastery of the Augustinian Canons at Walsingham, in Norfolk (twenty-seven miles N.W. of Norwich), attracted very many pilgrims. Norfolk people said that the Milky-way pointed to it, and was Walsingham-way. The monastery was founded in the eleventh century by Geoffrey de Taverche. Henry VIII. in the second year of his reign walked barefoot from the village of Barsham to the shrine at Walsingham, but afterwards he caused the image of our Lady to be burnt at Chelsea. The ruins are now a lofty arch, sixty feet high, some cloister and another arch, a stone bath, and the two Wishing Wells. Any pilgrim allowed to drink of their water had his wish.

† *Friars, all the four orders.* Grey Friars (Franciscans or Minorites); Black Friars (Dominicans); White Friars (Carmelites); Austin Friars (Augustines). The foundation of the Grey and Black Friars has been described. ‖ The Carmelites claimed Elijah for their founder. They were established in the twelfth century by Berthold, a Calabrian, who went to the Holy Land and formed a hermit community on Mount Carmel, the traditional abode of Elijah. Pressed out by the Saracens in 1238, they spread over Europe, and had in Langland's time about forty houses in England and Wales. The Austin Friars followed the Rule of St. Augustine, prescribed by Pope Alexander IV. in 1256.

‡ *Wam*, womb. First-English "wamb," the belly.
Glosing, commenting on, interpreting. ‖ "E.W." III., 305-310.

Ther preched a Pardoner, as he a Preest were,
Broughte forth a bulle with bishopes seles,
And seide that hymself might assoilen hem all
Of falseness, of fastynge, of vowes to-broke.
Lewéd men leved * him well, and likeden his words,
Comen and kneleden, to kissen hise bulles.†
He blessed ‡ them with his brevet,§ and bleared ‖ their eyne
And raughte with his ragéman ¶ rynges and broches.
Thus ye giveth your gold glotons to kepe."

* *Leved*, believed. First-English "lýfan," to allow.

† *Bulls* were so called from the seals attached. The round official seal of stamped lead attached to the document was called *bulla* from its roundness. This is one of a class of mimetic words said to originate in the roundness, or the motion, of the bubbles in a boiling pot. *Bull*, or *ball*, from the roundness of the bubble. *Ballot*, a little ball; *balloon*, a great one. *Ballare*, to dance from the movement of boiling, whence *ball*, a dance; *ballet*, a little dance. So *ballads* were probably named from the old custom of swaying to and fro in various ways, accordant to the mood expressed by the reciter.

‡ *Blessed*. Another MS. has *bonched*, hammered at. Icelandic "banga," to hammer, whence the common English form "to bang," and a provincial form "to bunch," meaning to strike.

§ *Brevet*, letter of indulgence. A short official letter. Old French "brievet," from Latin "breve," like English and German "brief." So also in Icelandic "bref" meant a letter and a written deed, or official despatch, in which last sense (according to Cleasby and Vigfusson), the word first occurs in the negotiation between Norway and Sweden, A.D. 1018.

‖ *Bleared*, made dim. This is not the word *bleared* applied to eyes red after crying—a word said to be formed from blare—but bleared, allied to blurred.

¶ *Raught with his ragéman*. *Raught*, reached, got to himself. First-English "ræ'can."—*Rageman*. In the Chronicle of Lanercost (edited by Stevenson, page 261), we read that an instrument or charter of subjection and homage to the Kings of England is called by the Scots *ragman*, because of the many seals hanging from it. "Unum instrumentum sive cartam subjectionis et homagii faciendi regibus Angliæ . . . . a Scottis propter multa sigilla dependentia ragman vocatur." That is the sense in which Langland uses the word. Afterwards in Wyntoun's Chronicle, Douglas and Dunbar, "ragman" and

But, says the poet, though the bishop were a saint and worth both his ears, his seals should not be sent to deceive the people. Parsons and parish priests, in this field full of folk that stood for the English world, complained in Will's dream to the bishop that their parishioners were poor since the pestilence time, and asked licence to live in London—

> "And sing there for simony: silver is sweet.
> Bishops and bachelors, both masters and doctors,
> That have cure under Christ, and crowning in token,
> Ben chargéd with Holy-Church Charity to till,
> That is leal love and life among learned and lewéd*;
> They lien in London in Lentene and elles.
> Some serven the King, and his silver tellen,†
> In the chequer and the chancelry, challenging his debts,
> Of wards and of wardmotes, waifs and strays.
> Some aren as seneschals and serven other lords,
> And ben in stead of stewards, and sitten and demen.‡

Conscience accused such men, and the people heard, and the world was made worse by their covetousness. The Cardinals to whom St. Peter entrusted his power to bind and to unbind were not the Cardinals at court, who take that name and presume power in themselves to make a Pope; they were the four Cardinal Virtues. So Will, in his Vision, looked upon the world till a King came into the field led by Knighthood—"the much might of the men made him to reign." And then came Kind-wit, the knowledge of the natural man, and he made Clerks; and Conscience, Kind-wit, and Knighthood together agreed that the Commons should support them. Kind-wit and the Commons contrived between them all the crafts, and for chief profit of the people made a plough, whereby men may live through loyal labour while there remains life and land. Here Langland applies the mediæval fable of the rats and mice who wished to bell the cat that they might know when to get out of his way; but when the bell was bought and fastened to a collar, there was no rat of all the rout, for all the realm of France,

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"ragment" mean a long piece of writing, a rhapsody, or an account. In course of time, it is said, "ragman's roll" became "rigmarole."

* *Lewed*, the unlearned mass of the people. First-English "leóde," people. I pass now to modern spelling, as far as may be without change of the words.

† *Tellen*, count. First-English "tellan."

‡ *Démen*, give judgment.

that durst have bound the bell about the cat's neck. Then stood forth a wise little mouse, who said—

"Though we had ykilléd the cat, yet should there come another
To cratchen us and all our kind, though we creep under benches,
For-thi * I counsel, for common profit, let the cat be,
And never be we so bold the bell him to shew.
For I heard my sire sayn, seven year past,
'There † the cat nis but a kitten the court is full ailing;'
Witness of Holy Writ, who so can read—

Væ terræ ubi puer est rex.—Salamon."

"Woe to thee, O Land, when thy king is a child!" (Ecclesiastes x. 16). There is here one of the pathetic echoes of this cry which blended with the voice of England in our literature after young Richard II. became king. Langland applied his fable of the belling of the cat to the power of Edward III.'s son, John of Gaunt, the richest noble in England, the wielder of royal power in the last years of his father's weakness, and one who was believed to be looking forward to possession of the throne. Detested by the commonalty, he was the cat whom the rats and mice desired to bell. Langland's parable was a veiled suggestion that no substantial gain was to be hoped. Though we might bell the cat, what of the kitten? Could the misery of the land with John of Gaunt foremost at court be less when it had a child for king and its princes ate in the morning? What his dream of the cat and the rats meant he said to his readers, "Divine ye, for I ne dare."

The misery of the land! There was burning and ravage of our coast towns at the close of Edward III.'s reign. Langland has represented country priests pleading that they could not draw livings out of congregations wasted and impoverished by plague. Later reference to these pestilences, as well as to a memorable high wind, and to the Treaty of Brétigny, fix the year 1362 as about the time when Langland began to write his Vision. The first two of the great pestilences of the fourteenth century were suffered by England in the years 1348–49 and 1360–61. The earlier of these,

* *For-thi*, therefore. † *There*, where.

known as "the Black Death" or "the Great Mortality," was, of all plagues, the most desolating ever known in Europe. It was said that the plague entered Italy with a thick foul mist from the east. Unseasonable weather had caused general failure of crops. In the spring of 1347, before the plague, bread was being distributed to the poor in Italian cities; 94,000 twelve-ounce loaves were given away daily from large public bakehouses erected in Florence alone. Famine preceded pestilence; and of the famine many died. The "Black Death" had raged on the northern shores of the Black Sea before it was brought thence to Constantinople. Thence it passed, in 1347, to Cyprus, Sicily, Marseilles, and some of the seaports of Italy. It spread over the Mediterranean islands, and reached Avignon in January, 1348. Petrarch's Laura was there among its victims. It spread through Italy and France, was in Florence by April, passed into Germany, entered England in August; but three months then went by before it had reached London. In 1349 it was sweeping over northern Europe, but it did not reach Russia till 1351. Those were not days of accurate statistics, and we may say nothing of the 23,840,000 said to have died by this plague in the East; but of Western towns, civilised enough to have some notion of the number of their inhabitants, Venice said that there perished 100,000 of her people, or three-fourths of the whole population; Florence said she had lost 60,000; Avignon, 60,000; Paris, 50,000; London, 109,000; Norwich, 51,100; Yarmouth, 7,052. In many places half the population died; some little towns and villages lost all by death and flight. Of the Franciscan Friars in Germany there were said to have perished 124,434, and in Italy 30,000. Merchants sought favour of God by laying down their treasures at the altar; monks shunned the gifts for the contagion that they brought, and closed their gates, and still had the vain riches of this world thrown by despairing

men over their convent walls. In the Hôtel Dieu, at Paris, when 500 were dying daily, pious women, Sisters of Charity, were about them with human ministrations and words of divine consolation. These nurses were perishing themselves daily of the disease from which they would not flinch, in the performance of their duty; and as they fell at their posts there never was a want of other gentlewomen to press in and carry on their sacred work. The Black Death was followed in England by a murrain among cattle. It has been estimated by a modern writer that this great pestilence destroyed a fourth part of the inhabitants of Europe.* The terror of this was fresh when pestilence, which broke out again at Avignon in 1360, was again scourging us in 1361. Of the second pestilence it was observed that the richer classes suffered by it in larger proportion than before.

The old fable of belling the cat, in the lines last quoted, was inserted in the first revision of the poem—that which produced the second text. A question between John of Gaunt's misuse of the power of the king and the succession of the king's grandson, the boy Richard, could not arise until after the death, in 1376, of Edward's eldest son and heir, Richard's father, the Black Prince.

The three texts of "The Vision of Piers Plowman" Mr. Skeat has distinguished by the letters A, B, C.

The A text, written about 1362,† is called also the Vernon, from a MS. in which it was written about the years 1370–80. The Vernon is a large and handsome illuminated vellum MS. in the Bodleian Library. It was called "Sawlhele,"‡ because

The Three Texts of "Piers Plowman."

* "The Black Death in the Fourteenth Century." From the German of I. F. C. Hecker, M.D., Professor at Frederick William's University at Berlin. Translated by B. G. Babington, M.D. London, 1833.

† 'E. W." IV. 286. ‡ "E. W." IV. 273.

there were copied into it a large number of religious poems and treatises helpful to the soul's salvation. It is called Vernon, because a slip pasted inside the cover tells that this MS. was given to the Bodleian by Sir Edward Vernon, once a fellow commoner of Trinity College; afterwards an active Royalist combatant in "the late civil war." It is a MS. of 800 double-columned pages (400 leaves), of which "Piers Plowman" occupies only fourteen. One leaf of "Sawlhele" has been cut out, and it happens to be that which contains the end of "Piers Plowman" and the beginning of the next poem.

Internal evidence of the time when the A, or Vernon, text of "Piers Plowman" was written has been already referred to. It is found especially in lines 187–200 of the Third Passus,† and lines 12–14 of the Fifth.

In the Third Passus Meed accuses Conscience of having

* Of the A type are (*a*), MS. Harl. 875, written about the year 1400; the seventeenth of its twenty-one leaves is lost, and it ends at line 144 of Passus VIII., a leaf or more being lost at the end. Its text is nearest to the Vernon, and rather fuller. (*b*), MS. in Trinity College, Cambridge (R. 3, 14), written not long after 1400. It is on seventy-two leaves of vellum, and has on its fly-leaf the coloured drawing copied for the frontispiece of Thomas Wright's edition. This MS., after giving the poem in its first form, appends the whole subsequent addition. (*c*), MS. in University College, Oxford, written early in the fifteenth century. It adds many pieces in Latin to the English poem, which is upon thirty-one leaves of vellum and five of paper, that on paper being by another hand. The copyist now and then confused the order of the poem in his transcript. A bit of Passus VII. is put into Passus II., followed by repetition of the end of Passus I. and a little of the opening of Passus II. After this the copy is right, except in omission from Passus VII. of the transposed passage. These four are the earliest and best MSS. of their class. There are six more, which are of the middle and second half of the fifteenth century, two of them tending to be of the fuller type.

† "Passus," as the name for a division of a poem, is derived from "pandere," to spread out, unfold, expand; hence, to unfold in speaking. Anchises (in Æneid vi. 723), "ordine singula pandit."

obliged the king to return from Normandy when his son suffered from hunger and cold, and to give up for a little silver the rich lordship with which Meed would have tempted and comforted his men. This reference is to the expedition in which Chaucer bore arms. In autumn, 1359, Edward III. invaded France with the greatest of his armies. At the end of March, 1360, he was before Paris, reduced in force by winter sufferings and famine. He returned to Chartres, leaving the road covered with men and horses dead of hunger and exhaustion, and on the 8th of May, 1360, concluded the peace of Brétigny, by which—while he remained lord of Aquitaine, holding in full sovereignty Gascony, Poitou, and other dependencies—he resigned his pretensions to the French crown, and to Normandy, Anjou, and Maine; gave up all conquered places, except Guines and Calais, and agreed to take three million of gold crowns in six years for the ransom of King John. Allusion, therefore, to these concessions fix the date of the A text of "Piers Plowman" after May, 1360.

In the Fifth Passus Conscience, when preaching, prayed the people to have pity of themselves

> "And prevede þat þis pestilences weore for puire synne,
> And this south-western wynt on a Seterday at even
> Was aperteliche for pruide and for no poynt elles."

There was a memorable time of pestilence in 1361; and Tyrwhitt, in a note to the Advertisement of his Glossary to Chaucer, first pointed out that such a destructive "south-west wind on a Saturday at even" blew on the 15th of January, 1362, according to the continuer of the short chronicle of Adam Murimuth.*

The B text of "The Vision of Piers Plowman," called

* "E. W." IV. 251.

also the Crowley, from Robert Crowley,* who first printed it in 1550, which has its eleven passus extended to twenty, is dated about the year 1377. This date rests upon lines 269–271 of the Thirteenth Passus—

> "In þe date of owre dryȝte,† in a drye apprile
> A þousande and þre hundreð tweis þretty and ten,
> My wafres þere were gesen ‡ when Chichestre was Maire."

John of Chichester, a rich London goldsmith, was mayor from October 28th, 1369, to October 27th, 1370. Professor Skeat quotes from a Chronicle of London of the year of his mayoralty: "John Chichestre, mayor, goldsmith. In this yere was so gret derthe of corne in England that a busshell of whete was worth xld." As Langland, when writing his Thirteenth Passus, refers back to this remembered year of scarcity, a few years are conjecturally added, and it is assumed that he may have been writing in or near the year 1377. The reference to the young heir to the throne in the fable of belling the cat, which was inserted in the A text during the writing of the B text, suggests also, as has been said, a date subsequent to the death of the Black Prince in June, 1376.

The C text, called also the Whitaker, from the editor who printed a MS. of that form in 1813,§ represents Langland's continual work upon his poem, which is ex-

* "E. W." IV. 288. One of the earliest MSS. of this type, written in the latter part of the fourteenth century, is in the library of Cambridge University (Dd. i. 17).

† Our Lord.

‡ Scarce. First-English, "gæsne."

§ "E. W." IV. 288. The MS. used by Dr. Whitaker passed into the possession of Sir Thomas Phillipps. Another of the same type, written perhaps about the year 1390, is among the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum (Vespasian B xvi.); another is in the Cambridge University Library; another at Oxford; and another at Trinity College, Dublin.

tended to twenty-three passus. It has been enlarged by interpolated passages, modified also by corrections and transpositions. These changes sometimes indicate change in the poet's attitude towards King Richard. An interpolated passage in the Fourth Passus makes Conscience tell the king that the ills of the land have almost brought it to pass

"þat no lond loueth the, and ȝut leest þyn owene."

Professor Skeat, after citing this,* points to a passage in Walsingham's Chronicle, which tells him how in 1392 the king was refused a loan of a thousand pounds by the city of London, and a Lombard who then lent it to the king was beaten and nearly killed by the Londoners. He adds, with good reason, that this may have been alluded to in the interpolated lines of the Fifth Passus, which tell the king that love of his people would bring him more silver than all his merchants or his mitred bishops.

"Oþer Lumbardes of Lukes that lyven by lone as Iewes." †

If this be a true suggestion, Langland was at work on the C text after 1392, and Professor Skeat places its date in 1393, perhaps a little later but not earlier.

The Poem.

We return to William's Vision of "all the wealth of this world and the woe both." What mean the mountain and the murky dale and the field full of folk, he will go on to show. From the Castle on the Hill came down to him a fair lady who called him by his name,

"And said, 'Will, sleepest thou? Seest thou this people
How busy they ben about the mase.‡
The most part of the people that passeth on this earth

* Preface III. to C Text, p. xvii., in Early English Text Society's edition.

† Passus V., l. 193.

‡ *Mase*, bewilderment.

Have they worship in this world they willen no better,
Of other heaven than here they holden no tale.' *
I was afeared of her face, though she fair were,
And said, 'Merci, madame ; † what may this be to mean ?
'The tower upon toft,' ‡ quoth she. 'Truth is therein,
And would that ye wrought as His word teacheth,
For He is Father of Faith, and Former of All.
To be faithful to Him He gave you five wits
For to worshipen Him therewith while ye liven here.' "

He bade the elements serve man, and yield all that man needed : three things only, clothing, and food, and drink, without excess. Though you desire much, Measure is medicine. All is not good for the spirit that the body asks, nor is the flesh fed by that in which the soul delights. Believe not thy body, for the beguiling world speaks through it. Hear the soul's warning when the flesh leagues with the fiend.

" 'Ah, ma dame, merci,' quoth I, 'me liketh well your words,
But the money of this mold that men so fast keepeth,
Tell ye me now to whom that treasure belongeth ?"
'Go to the Gospel,' quoth she, 'and see what God said
When the people apposed § him of a penny in the temple,
And God asked of them what was the coin.
'Reddite Cæsari,' said God, 'that to Cæsar befalleth,
Et quæ sunt Dei Deo,‖ or else ye don ill.'
For rightfully Reason should rule you all
And Kind-wit be Warden your wealth to keep,
And tutor of your treasure and take it you at need,
For husbandry and he holdeth together."

Then the dreamer asked what was meant by the deep Dale and dark. That, he was told,

" That is the Castle of Care ; whoso cometh therein
May ban that he born was in body and in soul ;

* *No tale*, no account.

† *Merci, madame.* Pardon me, madame.—Courteous introduction to the putting of a question.

‡ *Toft*, a green knoll ; a site on a hill cleared for building.

§ *Apposed him*, put to him.

‖ "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 21).

Therein woneth * a wight, that Wrong is his name,
Father of Falsehood, found it first of all."

It was he who urged Eve to do ill; who was the counsellor of Cain; who tricked Judas with the silver of the Jews, and hung him afterwards upon an elder-tree. He is the hinderer of love, and lieth always; he betrayeth soonest them who trust in earthly treasure, to encumber men with covetousness. That is his nature. The dreamer next wondered who she was that showed him such wise words of Holy Writ, and asked her name. She said, "I am Holy-Church; thou oughtest to know me. I received thee at the first, and made thee a free man. Thou broughtest me sureties to fulfil my bidding, to believe in me and love me all thy lifetime." Then he kneeled and asked grace of her, and sought her prayers for his amendment, and that she would teach him to believe on Christ. He sought to know of her no treasure but that she would only tell him how to save his soul.

"'When all treasures ben tried,' quoth she, 'Truth is the best;
I do it on Deus Caritas † to deem the sooth,
It is as dereworthy a druery ‡ as dear God himself.
For he that is true of his tongue and of his two hands
And doth the works therewith, and wilneth no man ill,
He is a god by the Gospel, aground and aloft,
And like our Lord also, by Saint Luke's words. §
Clerkés that knowen this should kennen it || about,
For Christian and Unchristian claimen it each one.'"

Kings should rule for the maintenance of Truth, and knights should be as those whom David swore to serve Truth ever. The fair lady told the dreamer of the faithful angels and the pride that laid Lucifer lowest

* *Woneth*, dwelleth. First-English 'wunian,' to dwell.

† *Deus Caritas*, God is Love.

‡ *As dereworthy a druery*, as precious an object of affection. *Dereworthy*, First-English, "deor wurthe." *Druery* (Old French "druerie"), love.

§ It was told Jesus, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it" (Luke viii. 20, 21).

|| *Kennen* it, make it known.

of all, with whom they that work evil shall dwell after their death day. But all that have wrought well shall go eastward to abide ever in heaven, where Truth is God's throne.

Love led thenceforth the angels; Love was mediator between God and Man. God the Father made us, loved us, and suffered His Son to die meekly for our misdeeds to amend us all. He willed no woe to his persecutors, but mildly with mouth he besought Mercy to have pity on that people that pained him to death.

"'Lere* it these lewed men, for lettered it knoweth,
Than Truth and True Love is no treasure better.'
'I have no kind knowing,' quoth I, 'ye mote ken me better
By what way it waxeth, and whether out of my meaning.'
'Thou doted daff,' quoth she, 'dull aren thy wits.'
I lieve thou learnedst too lite† Latin in thy youth.
Heu mihi quod sterilem duxi vitam juvenilem! ‡
It is a kind knowing that kenneth in thine heart
For to love thy Lord liefest of all
And die rather than do any deadly sin.
Melius est mori quam male vivere.§
And this I trow be Truth, whoso can teach thee better
Look thou suffer him to say, and so thou might learn.
For Truth telleth that Love is triacle || for sin
And most sovereign salve for soul and for body.
Love is the plant of peace and most precious of virtues,
For Heaven might not holden it, so heavy it seemed,
Till it had of the earth eaten his fill.
And when it had of this fold flesh and blood taken
Was never leaf upon lind¶ lighter thereafter.'"

"Forthi I rede** you rich have pity on the poor,
Though ye be mighty to mote†† be meek in your works;

* *Lere*, teach.

† *Lite*, little. First-English "lyt," from which "lytel" was formed by a diminutive suffix.

‡ Alas for me, that I have led a barren life in my youth.

§ It is better to die than to live ill.

|| *Triacle*, Theriaca, a very famous ancient antidote to poison.

¶ *Lind*, linden or lime-tree, applied also generally to a tree.

** *Rede*, counsel.

†† *Mighty to mote*, powerful when you cite poorer men, or plead against them in the law courts.

The same measure that ye meteth, amiss or else,
Ye shall be weighed herewith when ye wenden hence.
*Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis, remetietur vobis.**
Though ye be true of your tongue, and truly win,
And be as chaste as a child that neither chides nor fighteth,
But if† ye love loyally and lend‡ the poor
Of such good as God sent a goodly part,
Ye have no more merit in mass ne in hours
Than Malkin of her maidenhood, whom no man desireth.
For James the gentle judged in his books
That faith without fait§ is feebler than nought,
And dead as a door nail but if the deeds follow.
Fides sine operibus mortua est."‖

Many chaplains are chaste, but fail in charity. There are none harder and hungrier than men of Holy-Church, more hard and avaricious when advanced, and unkind to their kin and to all Christians. They eat up what is theirs for charity, and chide for more. Encumbered with covetousness they cannot creep out of it, so closely has avarice hasped them together. This is ill example to the unlearned people—

"For these aren wordés written in the Evangile
Date et dabitur vobis¶ (for I deal** you all),
And that is the lock of Love that unlooseth Grace,
That comforteth all Christians encumbered with sin.
So Love is leech of life, and lysse†† of all pain,
And the graft of grace, and graythest‡‡ way to Heaven.
Forthi I may say as I said, by sight of the text,
When all treasures ben tried, Truth is the best.

* "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew vii. 2; Luke vi. 38).

† *But if*, unless. ‡ *Lend*, give.

§ *Fait*, something done.

‖ "Faith without works is dead" (James ii. 20).

¶ "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke vi. 38).

** *Deal*, distribute to.

†† *Lysse*, ease. First-English "liss," forgiveness, dismissal, grace, favour, comfort.

‡‡ *Graythest*, straightest. Icelandic "greitha," to make ready, speed, further. "Greithit Drottins götur," "make straight the way of the Lord" (Luke iii. 4).

'Love it,' quoth that Lady, 'let may I* no longer
To lere† thee what Love is. Now loke thee‡ our Lord!'"

Then the dreamer knelt to the Lady, praying that she would teach him to know Falsehood from Truth. "Look on thy left hand," she said. "Lo, where he standeth; both Falseness and Favel (flattery) and fickle-tongued Liar, and many of their manners, both men and women." I looked, says Will, on my left hand, as the Lady taught me, and saw there as it were a woman richly clothed and crowned. On all her five fingers were rings with red rubies, and other precious stones. His heart was ravished by her riches, and he asked her name. "That maiden," said Holy-Church "is Meed" (earthly reward), "who before kings and commons thwarts my teaching. In the Pope's palace she is privy as myself. Her father is Favel, who has a fickle tongue that never spoke truth since he came to earth; and Meed is mannered after him. I," Holy-Church went on, "ought to be higher than she; my Father is the great God and Ground of all Graces, One God, without beginning, and I his good daughter. The man who loveth me and followeth my will shall have grace and a good end; but he who loves Meed, I dare pledge my life, shall lose for her love a lap full of charity. That most helps men to heaven; Meed most hinders: I rest upon David's words, 'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? He that walketh uprightly . . . nor taketh reward against the innocent.' To-morrow is this Meed to be married to the wretch Falseness, kin to the Fiend; Favel's tongue has enchanted her, and it is Liar's work that the Lady is thus wedded. Wait now, and thou wilt see whom it pleases that Meed should be thus married. Know, if thou canst, these lovers of lordships, and avoid them all. Leave them alone till Loyalty be judge, and have power to punish them, then put thy reason forth." So the Lady left Will to his study of the life that was now crowding upon his dream, commending him to Christ before she left, and bidding him never burden his conscience for desire of Meed. He was left sleeping, and saw in his dream how Meed was to be married, and saw the rich folk, her relations, that were bidden to the bridal—as sisours§ and summoners,‖ sheriffs and their clerks, beadles and

* *Let may I*, I may delay.

† *Lere*, teach. ‡ *Loke thee*, guard thee.

§ *Sisours*, persons appointed to hold assizes.

‖ *Summoners*, sompnours, apparitors. Persons who summoned offenders before the ecclesiastical courts, and, as Chaucer shows, used their position as means of extortion.

bailiffs, and brokers of ware, victuallers, advocates of the Arches,* a rout past reckoning. But Simony and Civil Law and sisours of counties seemed to be most intimate with Meed. It was Favel who first brought her from her chamber to be joined with Falseness; Simony and Civil Law assenting thereto at the prayer of Silver. Then Liar leapt forth with a deed that had been given by Guile to Falseness; Simony and Civil Law unfolded it, and thus it ran:—

"*Sciant presentes et futuri: et cetera.*

"Witen† all and witnessen that wonen here on earth
That Meed is y-married more for her richesse
Than for holiness or hendeness,‡ or for high kind.
Falseness is fain§ of her, for he wot‖ her rich.
And Favel hath with false speech feoffed¶ them by this letter
To be Princes of Pride, and poverty to despise,
To backbiten and to boasten and bear false witness,
To scornie and to scoldé, slanders to make
Both unbuxom** and bold, to break the ten hests.††
The Earldom of Envy and Ire he them granteth
With the Castle of Chest‡‡ and Chattering-out-of-Reason;
The County of Covetise he consenteth unto both,

**Advocates of the Arches.* The Archbishop of Canterbury's Court of Appeal was called the Court of Arches because in ancient times it was held in the church of St. Mary-le-Bow, Sancta Maria *de Arcubus*.

† *Witen*, know. "Know all and witness that dwell here on earth, &c.

‡ *Hendeness*, urbanity. The word in its first sense is equivalent to handiness. Handiness is opposed to clumsiness of the untaught, and implies therefore the civilised ways and courtesies of social life; urbanity as opposed to clownishness.

§ *Fain* (First-English, "fægen"), glad.

‖ *Wot*, knows. First-English "wát," from "witan."

¶ *Feoffed*, endowed with property.

** *Unbuxom*, unyielding. Buxom (First-English "buhsam,") from "bugan," to bow—bowsome—means pliant, the reverse to stiff and obstinate. A buxom woman is a woman without perversity, and I suppose the modern notion that to be buxom is to be plump comes of a popular association of fat with good temper.

†† *Hests*, commandments. First-English "hátan," to command; "hæs," a command.

‡‡ *Chest* (First-English "ceást"), strife, enmity.

With usury and avarice and other false sleithes*
In bargains and in brokages,† with the borough of Theft
And all the Lordship of Lechery in length and in breadth,
As in works and in words and in waitings of eyes,
In weeds‡ and in wishings, and with idle thoughts
Where that will would and workmanship faileth.
Gluttony he giveth them, and Great Oaths together,
All day to drink at diverse tavernés
There to jangle and to jape and judge their em-Christian,§
And in fasting days to frete‖ ere full time were,
And then to sitten and soupen till sleep them assail,
And awake with wanhope¶ and no will to amend,
For they lieveth be** lost, this is their last end;
And they to have and to hold and their heirs after,
A Dwelling with the Devil and damned be for ever,
With all the purtenance of Purgatory and the pain of Hell."

Wrong was the name of the first witness to this Deed, then followed Piers the Pardoner, Bette the Beadle of Buckinghamshire, Raynold the Reve of Rutland soken,†† Mund the Miller, and many more. When Theology heard this, he was vexed and said to Civil Law, "Now sorrow come to thee for contracting marriages that anger Truth. Meed is the daughter of Amends, and God grants her to Truth, but thou hast given her to a beguiler. Thy text telleth thee

* *Sleithes*, slippery ways. First-English "slíth," slippery, evil; "slíthan" and "slídan," to slide.

† *Brokages*, commissions. First-English "brúcan," to use, enjoy, draw profit.

‡ *Weeds*, attire, First-English "wæ'd," clothing.

§ *Em-Christian.* In First-English "em-" in composition meant even or equal.

‖ *Frete*, eat greedily. First-English "fretan," eat up, devour, gnaw. German "fressen."

¶ *Wanhope*, despair. The First-English prefix "wan" meant deficiency, as in "waning" of light, in the word "wan" meaning deficiency of colour, and in "want."

** *Lieveth be*, believe themselves to be.

†† *Soken.* First-English "sócn," a lordship privileged by the king to hold a "sóc" or soke; which was a court of the king's tenants or sóc-men authorised to minister justice or have jurisdiction, and whose tenure was therefore called "socagium" or socage-tenure.

not so. Truth saith 'the Labourer is worthy of his hire.' Yet thou hast bound her to Falseness. Fie on thy law! Thou livest only by leasings. Thou and Simony shame Holy-Church. The notaries and ye trouble the people. Ye shall pay for it, both of you. Ye know well that Falseness is faithless and of Beelzebub's kin; but Meed is a well-born maiden who might kiss the King for cousin if she would. Be wise then. Take her to London where the law is taught, and see whether any law will suffer them to come together. But though the Justices adjudge her to Falseness, yet beware of the wedding. Truth has good wit, and Conscience is of his counsel and knows each one of you, and if he find you wanting and in league with Falseness it shall in the end be bitter to your souls."

Civil Law agreed to this appeal to London; but Simony and the notaries could agree to nothing until they saw silver for it. Then Favel brought out florins enough, and bade Guile give gold all about, and specially to the notaries that none of them might fail, and fee False-Witness with florins enough, "For he may master Meed and make her subject to my will." When the gold was given there was a great thanking of Falseness and Favel, and many came to comfort Falseness, saying to him softly, "We shall never rest until Meed be thy wedded wife. For we have mastered Meed with our smooth tongues, and she agrees to go to London, and has agreed to be married for money, if Law so will judge." Then Favel was glad, and Falseness was of good cheer, and the people on all sides were summoned to be ready to go with them to Westminster and honour the wedding. But they had no horses. Then Guile set Meed on a sheriff newly shod, Falseness rode on a soft-trotting sisour, and Favel on a finely-adorned flatterer. Provisors* were saddled as palfreys for Simony. Deans and sub-deans, archdeacons and other officials were saddled with silver to suffer all sins of the rout and carry bishops; Liar was to be a long cart to carry friars, swindlers, and the rest who usually go afoot. So they went forth together with Guile for their guide, and having Meed amongst them. Smoothness saw them on the way and said nothing, but sped before to the king's court, where he told Conscience, and Conscience told the king. The king swore that if he caught Falseness or Favel, no man should bail them, but they should be hanged. He bade a constable go fetter Falseness, and cut off Guile's head; put Liar in pillory if he could catch him, and bring Meed into his presence. Dread, who stood at the door, heard this doom, went nimbly to

* *Provisors* were persons whom the Pope nominated to livings that were not yet vacant.

Falseness, and bade him and his fellows flee for fear. Falseness fled then to the friars; and Guile was hurrying off, when the merchants met him and kept him and took him into their shops, where he was dressed as an apprentice and displayed their wares. Liar leapt off and found no friends till the Pardoners took pity on him, brought him into their house, washed him and clothed him, and sent him on Sundays into the churches to sell pardons by the pound. Then the physicians were displeased, and wrote for Liar's help as an examiner of waters. Spicers sought aid from his cunning in gums. Minstrels met with him and kept him by them half a year and eleven days. But the friars by smooth words got him amongst themselves. He may go abroad in the world as much as he pleases, but is always sure of a welcome home when he returns to them.

Simony and Civil Law appealed to Rome for grace. But Conscience accused both to the king, and told him, that if the clergy did not amend, their covetousness would pervert his kingdom and harm Holy-Church for ever. So they all fled for fear, except the Maiden Meed, who trembled, wept, and wrung her hands at finding herself prisoner. The king bade a clerk take charge of her and make her at ease. He would himself ask her whom she chose to wed, and if she answered wisely he would forgive all her misdeeds. The clerk took her courteously into a bower of bliss, and sat down by her. There was mirth and minstrelsy for her pleasure, and many worshipped her who came to Westminster. Justices made haste to the bower of this bride, and, by the clerk's leave, comforted her, bidding her not mourn, for they would manage the king and shape a way for her to go whither she would, in spite of all that Conscience could do. Meed thanked them mildly, gave them gold and silver cups, rubies and treasure. When these were gone there came the clerks bidding her be blithe, for they were her own to work her will while their lives lasted. Meed promised her love to them, said she would make them lords and buy them benefices, to have plurality; and those she loved should be advanced where the most able limped behind. Then came to her a confessor coped as a friar, and offered, whatever her sins might be, to absolve her for a load of wheat, to hold by her himself and put down Conscience, if she liked, among kings, knights, and clergy. Then Meed knelt to be shriven by him, told him a shameless tale, and gave him a noble that he might be her bedesman, and might do her bidding among knights and clerks to thwart Conscience. He absolved her at once and said, "We have a window in hand that will stand us in a good sum: if you will glaze the gable and set your name in it, we shall sing for Meed solemnly at mass and at matins as for a sister of our order." Meed laughed and said, "Friar, I shall be your friend, and never fail

you as long as you aid lords and ladies in their worldly delights and do not rebuke them. Do that, and I will roof your church and build your cloister, and both windows and walls I will so mend and glaze and paint and portray, that every man may see I am a sister of your order." But, says the poet here in his own person—

> "Ac* God to all good folk such graving defendeth,†
> To writen in windows of any well-deeds,
> Lest pride be painted there, and pomp of the world.
> For God knoweth thy conscience and thy kind will,
> Thy cost and they covetise, and who the catel ought ‡
> For thy lief Lordés love, leaveth such writings,
> God in the Gospel such graving not alloweth,
> *Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextera.*
> Let not thy left half, our Lord teacheth,
> Ywit§ what thou dealest with thy right side."

Meed then pleaded with mayors, sheriffs, and serjeants against the putting in the pillory of bakers, brewers, butchers, cooks, and others, who build themselves high houses upon gains made by dishonesty in selling by retail. Against such wrongers of the people the poet, in his own person, speaks earnestly, but Meed advises the mayor to take bribes from them and let them cheat. To this the poet adds his reminder of Solomon's threat against those who receive such gifts. Fire shall devour their dwellings.‖

Then the king called Meed before him, gently reproved her for following Guile and desiring to be wedded without his consent, but forgave her on condition of amendment. She must not again vex him and Truth, lest she be imprisoned in Corfe Castle or in a worse place.

"I have a knight," said the king, "named Conscience, lately come from beyond the seas. If he be willing to wed you, will you have him?"

"Yea, lord," said the lady; "Heaven forbid that I should not be wholly at your command."

Then Conscience was summoned to appear before the king and his

* *Ac*, but. † *Defendeth*, forbiddeth.

‡ *Who the catel ought*, who owns the property; to whom the goods seized by the covetous really belong.

§ *Ywit*, know.

‖ "For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery" (Job xv. 34).

council. He knelt and bowed before the king, to know his will and what he was to do.

"Wilt thou wed this maid, if I assent, for she is fain of thy fellowship, and to be thy mate?"

Quoth Conscience to the king, "Christ forbid! Woe betide me ere I wed such a wife. She is frail of her faith and fickle of her speech, and maketh men misdo many score times. She misleads wives and widows. She and Falseness caused your father's* fall. She has poisoned popes, she hurteth Holy-Church," and very many more of the great evils of the world were charged, in his reply to the king, by Conscience against Meed.

"Nay, lord," quoth that lady, "the wrong lies with him. Where mischief is greatest, Meed can help. Thou, Conscience, well knowest that thou hast hung on my neck eleven times for gold to give as thee liked. Even now I might make thee more of a man than thou knowest. Thou hast defamed me foully here before the king. *I* never killed a king or counselled a king's death, but saved myself and sixty thousand lives here and in many lands. But thou hast slackened many a man's will to burn and destroy and beat down strength. Thou, Conscience, gavest wretched counsel to the king to leave his heritage of France in the enemy's hand.† A conquered kingdom or duchy is not to be parted with, when so many who fought to win it and followed the king's will ask their shares. The least lad in the king's service, when the land is won, looks after lordship or other large meed, whereby he may live as a man for evermore. That is the nature of a king who overcomes his enemies; thus to help all his host, or else to grant all that his men may win, for them to do their best with. Therefore I advise no king to admit Conscience to his counsels, if he wish to be a conqueror. Were I a crowned king, Conscience should never be my constable or marshal of my men when I must fight. Had I, Meed, been his marshal in France, I dare lay my life he would have been lord of the land in length and breadth, and the least brat of his blood a baron's peer.

"Unkindly thou, Conscience, counselled'st him thence
To let so his lordship for a little money.
It becometh for a king that shall keep a realm
To give men Meed that meekly him serveth,
To aliens, to all men, to honour them with gifts;

* Edward II.'s.

† By the Treaty of Brétigny, May 8th, 1360 ("E. W." IV. 297).

Meed maketh him beloved, and for a man y-hold.
Emperors and earls and all manner lords
Through gifts have yeomen to run and to ride;
The Pope and all prelates presents underfongen*
And give meed to men to maintain their laws;
Serjeants for their service meed they ask,
And take meed of their masters as they may accord;
Beggars and bedesmen crave meed for their prayers;
Minstrels for their minstrelsy a meed they ask;
Masters that teach clerks crave for their meed;
Priests that preach and the people teach
Ask meed and mass-pence and their meat both;
All kyne crafty men crave meed for their apprentices,
Merchandise and meed must needs go together;
Is no lede† that liveth that he ne loveth Meed,
And glad for to gripe her, great lord or poor."

Then quoth the king to Conscience, "Meed deserves mastery. But, "Nay," quoth Conscience to the king, "clerks know the truth, that Meed is evermore a maintainer of Guile, as the Psalter sheweth. There is besides Meed, Mercede, which is the just hire for work done, but men give meed many a time where there is nothing earned. Payment for work done is mercede, not meed. There is no meed in merchandise, that is but exchange of a penny for a pennyworth; and if the king give lordship to his liegemen, he does that for love, and may revoke the gift." Conscience discussed more fully the difference between Mercede and Meed who brought Absalom to hanging, and who caused Saul's kingdom to pass from him. "The speaker of truth," said Conscience, "is now blamed; but, I, Conscience, know this, that Reason shall reign and Agag shall suffer. Saul shall be b'amed and David diademed: and each of us shall be in the keeping of a Christian king."

"Shall no Meed be master never more after,
But Love and Lowness and Loyalty together
Shall be masters on mold,‡ true men to help."

Meed hinders the law by her large gifts,

"But Kind Love shall come yet and Conscience together,
And make of Law a labourer, such love shall arise

* *Underfongen*, receive.
† *Is no lede*, there is no man. First-English, "leod."
‡ *On mold*, on earth.

And such peace among the people, and a perfect truth,
That Jews shall ween in their wit and wax so glad
That their king be ycome from the court of heaven,
Moses or Messias, that men ben so true.
For all that beareth baselards,* bright sword, or lance,
Axe or hatchet, or any kynne weapon,
Shall be doomed to the death, but if he do it smithie†
Into sickle or into scythe, to share or to coulter.
Conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres, et lanceas
suas in falces.‡
Each man to play with a plough, a pickaxe, or a spade,
Spinnen and speak of God, and spill no time."

To more prophesy from Isaiah of the day when war shall cease on earth and God be truly known Meed replied with half a text from the Proverbs of Solomon, and was confuted by the other half, with a comment that she was like the woman who justified doing as she pleased,—with the text "Prove all things" at the bottom of a leaf, and omitted to turn over the page and read "Hold fast that which is good."

After all this argument the king bade Conscience kiss Meed. Conscience replied that he would rather die than do so, unless Reason counselled him. "Then," said the king, "ride away quickly, and fetch Reason. He shall rule my realm, and advise me concerning Meed and other things, tell me to whom she is to be wedded, and take account with you, Conscience, as to your dealings with my people, learned and unlearned." Conscience then rode off gladly to Reason and gave the king's message.

"'I shall array me to ride,' quoth Reason, 'rest thou awhile':—
And called Cato his knave, courteous of speech,
And also Tom True-Tongue-tell-me-no-tales-
Ne-leasings-to-laugh-of-for-I-loved-it-never,
And set my saddle upon Suffer-till-I-see-my-time;

* *Baselards* were long daggers worn in the girdle. It was with a baselard that Sir William Walworth stabbed Wat Tyler. The weapon was worn by civilians in Richard II.'s time.

† *But if he do it smithie*, unless he cause it to be forged.

‡ "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks" (Isaiah ii. 4).

Let warroke* him well with Advise-thee-before,
For it is the wone† of Will to wince and to kick."

Then Conscience and Reason rode together, talking of the mastery of Meed at court. Waryn Wiseman and his fellow Wilyman were fain to follow that they might take counsel of Reason for record before the king and Conscience in case they had a plaint against Wilyman and Wittiman and Waryn Wringlaw. But Conscience knew them well, and said to Reason, "Hither come servants of Covetise. Ride forth, Sir Reason, and reck not of their tales; for they will abide where wrath and wrangling is, but love and loyalty are not after their hearts. They will do more for a dinner or a dozen capons than for our Lord's love. Then Reason rode forth, and did not look back till he met the king. Then came the king, says the poet, and greeted Sir Reason courteously, and set him between himself and his son.

When the poem was begun, in 1362 or 1363, Edward III.'s son and heir, the Black Prince, still lived, and the image of the sovereign enthroning Reason between himself and his heir was, of course, not altered when change, caused by the death of the king's son, led to the covert reference to tyranny of John of Gaunt and danger from Richard's youth, in the inserted fable about belling the cat. To have then written in this part of the poem grandson for son would have implied a direct identifying of the king in the allegory with the King of England, which would have been equally bad in art and policy.

The king, then, set Sir Reason between himself and his son, and for a long while they spoke wise words together. Then came Peace into Parliament, and put up a bill showing all the violent misdeeds of Wrong. "No women are safe from him, he takes my geese, my pigs, my grass. Because of his fellowship," said Peace, "I dare not carry silver to the fair upon St. Giles's Down. He is bold to borrow, bad to pay. He borrowed my horse Bayard, which never was returned or paid for. He maintains men to murder my servants, break my barn-doors, and carry off my wheat. Because of him I scarcely venture to look up."

The king knew this to be true, for Conscience told him that Wrong was a wicked man who worked much woe. Then Wrong besought help of Wisdom, looked to men of law, and offered them large pay for their help. "With your help," he said, "I should care

* *Warroke*, girth. First-English "wear" and "wearh," a knot.
† *Wone*, custom.

little for Peace, though he complained for ever." Then Wisdom and Wit went together, and took Meed with them to win mercy.

> "Yet Peace put forth his head, and his pan* bloody;
> 'Without guilt, God wot, got I this scathe;
> Conscience knoweth it well and all the true Commons.'"

Wiles and Wit went about to bribe the king, if they could; but the king swore that Wrong should suffer, and commanded a constable to cast him in irons where he should not for seven years see feet or hands. A wise one said, "That is not best. Let him have bail if he can make amends." Wit seconded this. Meed meekly sought mercy,

> "And proffered Peace a present all of pure gold;
> 'Have this, man, of me,' quoth she, 'to mend thy scathe;
> For I will wage† for Wrong he will do so no more.'
> Piteously Peace then prayédé the king
> To have mercy on that man that many times grieved him—
> 'For he hath waged me well, as Wisdom him taught;
> Meed hath made mine amends; I may no more asken,
> So all my claims ben quit, by so the king assent.'"

The king answered that if Wrong escaped so lightly, he would laugh and be bolder. "He shall lie in the stocks so long as I live, unless Reason have ruth of him."

Then some besought Reason to take pity on Wrong, provided Meed were bail for him. Reason bade them not counsel him to pity—until lords and ladies all loved truth, Pernel locked up her finery, spoilt children were chastised, the poor were clothed out of the luxury of the clergy, monks and friars kept to their strict rule, and learned men lived as they taught; till the king's counsel was all for the profit of the Commons; till bishops became bakers, brewers, tailors for all manner of men as they found need, and Saint James was sought not in pilgrimages to Gallicia, but where the sick poor lie in their prisons and their wretched homes; till the Rome-runners carried no more of the king's silver over sea, coined or uncoined: and yet, he said, I will have no ruth upon Wrong, while Meed masters the pleadings. "Were I," said Reason, "a crowned king, never wrong that I knew of should

* *Pan*, crown. Swedish "panna," the skull, head.
† *Wage*, engage, be surety.

go unpunished if within my power, upon peril of my soul; nor should it get my grace by any gift or glosing speech. By Mary of Heaven, I would do no mercy for Meed. For *nullum malum* should be *impunitum*, and *nullum bonum irremuneratum*. Let your confessor, Sir King, construe this into English, and if you work it out into deeds, Law may turn labourer and cast dung to the field, while Love shall lead thy hand as thee lief liketh."

Confessors coupled themselves together to translate this Latin. Meed winked at the lawyers that by subtle speech they might put down Reason, of whom all just men said that he spoke truth, while Conscience and Kind-Wit courteously thanked him. Love made light of Meed and Loyalty less. Whoever wedded her, they said, would be betrayed. Meed mourned when she was scorned, and a sisour and a summoner led her away softly from the judgment-hall. A sheriff's clerk proclaimed that she was to be taken into safe custody, but not imprisoned. The king then took counsel with Conscience and Reason, looked with anger on Meed, frowned on the men of law as hinderers of truth, and declared that, if he reigned any while, Reason should reckon with them, and judge them as they deserved. He would have loyalty for his law, and an end of jangling. His law should be administered by leal men, who were holy of their lives.

Conscience said it would be hard to bring matters to that without help of the Commons.

Reason declared that all realms could be brought under his rule.

"I would it were well about," said the king, "and, therefore, Reason, you shall not ride hence. I make thee my chief Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Parliament, and Conscience shall be as the king's judge in all the courts." "I assent," said Reason, "if thou thyself hear both sides between Lords and Commons, and send no *supersedeas*, or seal no private letters with unfitting sufferance: I assent, and I dare lay my life that Love will furnish you with more silver than all the Lombards." * The king was commanding Conscience to discharge all his officers, and appoint those whom Reason loved, when William awoke from the first dream of his Vision.

In the first form of the earlier part of the Vision the poet grieved when awake that he had not slept better and seen more, walked a furlong on over the Malvern Hills, sat down, babbled on his beads, and slept again. That when he began the poem he was at home on Malvern Hills may be inferred from his change in the manner of prefacing the second dream when in after years he recast his work. He

* "E. W." IV. 299.

went to sleep on Malvern Hills, and awoke, he then said, to find himself living on Cornhill, Kit and he in a cot. He was clothed as an idler, and yet not much of an idler, for he wrote about such men as Reason taught him. For as he came by Conscience he met Reason, in a hot harvest time when he had health and limbs for labour, but loved to fare well and do nothing but drink and sleep. Then he represents Reason asking him what work he did in the world; and the lesson of Duty which allows no true man to be "a loller" is associated with those answers from Will already referred to, which indicate what was his work in London.* Reason then bade him begin at once a life that should be loyal to the Soul. "Yea, and continue," quoth Conscience. And to the kirk, Will says, he went to honour God, weeping and wailing for his sins, until he slept.

These new incidents served as a natural introduction to the second dream. In this there was again seen the field full of folk from end to end, and Reason and Conscience, by whom he himself had just been counselled, were there among the stir of men. Reason clothed as a pope, with Conscience for cross-bearer, stood before the king, and before all the realm

> "Preached and proved that these pestilences
> Was for pure sin, to punish the people;
> And the south-west wind on Saturday at eve
> Was pertelich† for pride, and for no point else.
> Piries‡ and plum-trees were puffed to the earth
> In ensample to syggen§ us we should do better;
> Beeches and broad oaks were blown to the ground,
> And turned upward their tail in tokening of dread
> That deadly sin ere doomsday should foredo us all."

The south-west wind here spoken of blew, in pestilence time, on Saturday, the 15th of January, 1362 (new style), and among other things that it blew down was the spire of Norwich Cathedral. The gale must have been fresh in the minds of the people when it was joined with the pestilence in Reason's warning to the people to flee from the wrath of God, and the allusion to it helps to determine the time when Langland began his poem.‖

* "E. W." IV. 286.
† *Pertelich*, apertly, openly, manifestly. Latin "apertus," open.
‡ *Piries*, pear-trees. Latin "pyrus."
§ *Syggen*, say to. First-English "secgan," to say.
‖ "E. W." IV. 286.

Reason, thus preaching, bade Wasters go work for their food and lose no time, prayed Pernel (Petronilla) to lock up her embroidery, taught Thomas Stow to fetch his wife out of disgrace, and warned Wat that his wife was to blame, for her head-gear was worth half a mark, and his hood not a groat. He charged Bet to cut a bough or two and beat Betty her maid if she would not work, and merchants as they became rich not to withhold from their children due correction; for the wise man wrote, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Then he prayed prelates and priests to prove in themselves their preaching to the people; "Live ye as ye lereth* us, we shalleth lieve you the better." And then he bade Religion hold her rule; for Gregory the Great had said that a monk out of rule is a fish out of water.

> "For if heaven be on this earth or any ease for soul,
> It is in cloister or in school, by many skills† I find.
> For in cloister cometh no man to chide ne to fight,
> In school is love and lowness and liking to learn.
> As many day men telleth, both monks and canons
> Han ride out of array, their rule evil y-hold,
> And pricked about on palfreys from places to manors,
> An heap of hounds at his [back] as he a lord were;
> And but his knave kneel that shall his cup hold
> He looketh all louring and 'Lurdane!'‡ him calleth.
> Little hath lords ado to give land from their heirs
> To religious that han no ruth though it rain on their altars,
> In places where these persons be by themselves at ease
> Of the poor han they no pity, that is their pure charity."

Then follows a passage that, in the years next following the reign of Henry VIII., was looked upon by the reformers as giving to Langland's poem almost the dignity of prophecy. I quote it without change of spelling:—

> "Ac ȝut shal come a kyng and confesse ȝow alle
> And bete ȝow, as the byble telleth for brekyng of ȝoure reule,
> And amende ȝow monkes, moniales, and chanons,
> And put ȝow to ȝoure penaunce *ad pristinum statum ire.*§
> And barons and here barnes blame ȝow and reprove;

* *Lereth*, teach.

† *Skills*, reasons.

‡ *Lurdane*, worthless fellow. French "lourdin."

§ To go to your former state; be as you were at your foundation.

*Hii in curribus & hi in equis: ipsi obligati sunt, et ceciderunt.**
Freres in here freitour† shulle fynde that tyme
Bred withoute beggynge to lyue by euere after,
And Constantyn shal be here cook and couerer of here churche.
For the Abbot of Engelande‡ and the abbesse hys nece
Shullen haue a knok on here croumes and incurable the wounde.
Contrivit dominus baculum impiorum, virgam dominancium, plaga insanabili.§
Ac er that kyng come, as cronycles me tolde,
Clerkus and holy churche shal be clothed newe."

Reason went on in his sermon to counsel the king to love his Commons:—

"'For the Comune ys the kynges tresour, Conscience wot wel;
And also,' quath Reson, 'ich rede|| 3ow riche
And comuners to a-corden in alle kynne treuthe.
Let no kynne consail ne couetyse 3ow departe
That on wit and on wil alle 3oure wardes keep.
Lo! in heuene an hy¶ was an holy comune
Til Lucifer the lyere leyued** that hym-selue
Were wittyour and worthiour than he that was hus maister.
Hold 3ow in vnité, and he that other wolde
Ys cause of alle combraunce to confounde a reame.'
And siththen†† he preide the Pope haue pite of Holy-Churche,
And no grace to graunte til good loue were
Among alle kynne kynges ouer cristene puple.
'Comaunde that alle confessours that eny kynge shryueth,

* "Some trust in chariots and some in horses. . . . They are brought down and fallen" (Psalm xx. 7, 8).

† *Here fritour*, their convent. *Here*, their.

‡ In an earlier version it was the "Abbot of Abingdon," who should have "a knock of a king."

§ "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers . . . with a continual stroke" (Isaiah xiv. 5, 6). Langland's quotations are from the Vulgate, then in use.

|| *Rede*, counsel.

¶ *An hy*, on high.

** *Leyued*, believed.

†† *Siththen*, after that.

Enioyne hem pees for here penaunce and perpetual for-
ȝeuenesse
Of alle manere accioun̄s, and eche man loue other.
And ȝe that secheth Seint Iame and seyntes of Rome,
Secheth seinte Treuthe in̄ sauacion of ȝoure saules:
Qui cum patre et filio that faire hem by-falle
That suweth* my sarmon.' And thus ended Reason."

When Reason had done preaching, Repentance went among the throng, and made Will weep and Pernel Proudheart stretch herself flat on the earth. It was long ere she looked up and cried upon the Lord for mercy. Pernel personifying Pride, with her began the repentant confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins, which classify homely suggestions of the evil that is in the world. After Pride came Envy to confession; after Envy Wrath, dweller with men who delight in harming one another. Prelates and friars are at war, and so Wrath keeps them in dispute. One of Wrath's aunts is a nun, another an abbess; he has been cook in their kitchen and made their pottage of jangles. The sisters sit and dispute until "Thou liest!" and "Thou liest!" be lady over them all. Wrath sits in the wives' pews. "The parson knows how little I love Lettice at the Stile, my heart was changed towards her from the time when she was before me at sacrament to take the holy bread. I don't care to live among monks, for they eat more fish than flesh, and drink weak ale; but otherwhile when wine cometh and when I drink late I have a flux of a foul mouth well five days after." "Now repent thee!" quoth Repentance, "and be sober;" and absolved him, and bade him pray to God by His help to amend. Luxury next came to confession and repentance; then Avarice in a torn tabard of twelve years old, who was once apprentice to Sim at the Stile,† where he learned to lie and to use false weights. He went with his master's goods to the fair at Winchester or Weyhill, and his wares would have gone unsold for seven years had Guile not helped him. Avarice told of tricks of trade learnt from the drapers; how his wife, Rose the Regrater, wove, and paid the spinsters by false weight for their work upon the wool; how she was brewster too, and played tricks with her ales.

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* *That suweth*, that follow, or act according to. French "suivre."

† *Sim at the Stile.* In another version he is "Sim atte noke," equivalent to "atten oke," at the oak; here use happens to be made of the answering phrase for a hypothetical dwelling-place "at the stile." Both forms remain in the phrase "Jack Nokes and Tom Stiles." See, just before, "Lettice at the Stile."

"Didst thou never make restitution?" quoth Repentance.

"Yes," said Avarice; "I was lodged once with a company of chapmen, and when they were asleep I got up and rifled their bags."

"That was a rueful restitution," quoth Repentance, "forsooth. Thou wilt hang high for it, here or in hell. Usedst thou ever usury in all thy lifetime?"

"Nay, only in my youth, when I learned among the Lombards to clip coin, and took pledges of more worth than the money lent. I lent to those who would lose their money; they bought time. I have lent to lords and ladies that loved me never after. I have made a knight of many a mercer."

"By the rood," said Repentance, "thine heirs shall have no joy in the silver thou leavest. The Pope and all his pardoners cannot absolve thee of thy sins unless thou make restitution."

"I won my goods," Avarice went on, "by false words and false devices. I am rich through Guile and Glosing. If my neighbour had anything more profitable than mine, I used all my wit to find how I might have it. And if it could be had no other way, at last I stole it, or shook his purse privily, unpicked his locks. And if I went to the plough, I pinched on his half acre, so that I got a foot of land or a furrow of my neighbour's earth: and if I reaped, I bade my reapers put their sickle into that I never sowed. On holy days when I went to church, I mourned not for my sins, but for any worldly good that I had lost. Though I did deadly sin, it less troubled me than money lent and lost, or long in being paid. And if a servant was at Bruges to await my profit, and trade with my money, neither matins nor mass, nor penance performed, nor Paternoster said, could comfort the mind that was more in my goods than in God's grace and His great might."

"Now," quoth Repentance, "truly I have ruth of your way of living. Were I a friar, in good faith, for all the gold on earth, I would not clothe me or take a meal's meat of thy goods, if my heart knew thee to be as thou sayest. I would rather live on water-cresses than be fed and kept on false men's winnings. Thou art an unnatural creature. I cannot absolve thee until thou hast made, according to thy might, to all men restitution. All that have of thy goods are bound at the high day of doom to help thee to restore. The priest that takes thy tithe shall take his part with thee in purgatory and help pay thy debt, if he knew thee to be a thief when he received thine offering."

Then there was a Welshman named Evan Yield-again, who said in great sorrow that though he were left without livelihood, he would restore to everyone, before he went thence, all that he had won from him wickedly. Robert the Rifler looked on *Reddite* and wept sorely,

because he had not wherewith to make restitution: and he prayed with tears to Christ, who pitied Dismas his brother, the repentant thief upon the cross, to rue on him, Robert, who had not *Reddere*, and never hoped to come by it through any craft he knew. "By the rood," said Repentance, "thou art on the way to heaven if that be in thy heart which I hear upon thy tongue—

> "'Trust in his mochel mercy and yet might thou be saved,
> For all the wretchedness of this world and wicked deeds
> Fareth as a fork of fire that fell emid Temese
> And died for a drop of water; so doth all sins
> Of all manner men that with good will
> Confessen hem and crien mercy: shullen never come in hell.'
> *Omnis iniquitas quoad misericordiam Dei est quasi scintilla in medio maris.**
> 'Repent thee anon!' quoth Repentance, right so to the usurer,
> 'And have His mercy in mind.'"

After Avarice came Gluttony in like manner to Repentance, and confessed his evil ways. On his way to church on a Friday fast-day, when he passed the house of Betty the brewster, she bade him good morrow, and asked whither he went.

"To Holy-Church," he said, "to hear mass, and then sit and be shriven, and sin no more."

"I have good ale, gossip Glutton, wilt thou assay?"

"What hast thou?" quoth he. "Any hot spices?"

"I have pepper and peony-seed, and a pound of garlic, a farthing's worth of fennel-seed for fasting days."

Then goeth Glutton in, and Great-oaths after. Ciss the sempstress sat on the bench, Wat the warrener and his wife drunk, Tom the tinker and two of his boys, Hick the hackneyman and Hugh the needler, Clarice of Cock Lane, the Clerk of the church, Sir Piercy Pridie and Pernel of Flanders, Daw the ditcher, with a dozen idle lads of porters and of pick-purses and of pilled tooth-drawers. A ribibour† and a ratcatcher, a raker and his boy, a roper and a riding-king, and Rose the disher, Godfrey the garlicmonger, Griffith the Welshman, and a heap of upholders early in the morning gave Glutton with glad cheer good ale

* All Iniquity in relation to the Mercy of God is as a spark in the midst of the sea.

† *Ribibour*, player on the rebeck, or rude country fiddle.

for hansel. Clement the cobbler cast off his cloak and put it up at New Fair.* Hick the hackneyman threw his hood after, and bade Bet the Butcher be on his side. Chapmen were chosen to appraise the goods. Then arose great disputing and a heap of oaths, each seeking to get the better of the other, till Robin the roper was named umpire to end the dispute. Hick the hackneyman had the cloak, in covenant that Clement should fill the cup and have the hackneyman's hood, and hold himself satisfied; and whoever first repented should arise after and greet Sir Glutton with a gallon of ale. Then follows a lively picture of Glutton's drunkenness, and his being helped home by Clement the cobbler. His wife put him to bed, where he slept all Saturday and Sunday, and the first words he said when he awoke were, "Who holds the bowl?" His wife and his conscience rebuked him of sin; he became ashamed, shrove himself to Repentance, and cried, "Have mercy on me, thou Lord that art on high. To thee, God, I, Glutton, yield me guilty of my trespass with the tongue, swearing, I cannot tell how often, by 'thy Soul' and by 'thy Sides,' and 'so help me God Almighty!' where no need was, many times falsely; I have over-supped myself at supper, and sometimes eaten at dinner more than nature could digest. I cannot speak for shame of my filthiness. Before noon on fast-days I fed me with ale out of reason, among ribalds to hear their ribaldry. Hereof, good God, grant me forgiveness of all my ill living in all my lifetime."

Sloth, described with the same homely truth as really seen and known among the people, came to Repentance after Gluttony, and completed the embodiment of the chief misdeeds of the world in the confessions of the Seven Deadly Sins. Then Repentance prayed for all the penitents, and after the prayer of Repentance, Hope blew on a horn "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven," till all the saints joined with the sinners in the song of David, "Oh, Lord, Thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God!"

Then thronged a thousand men together, crying upward to Christ and to his pure mother, that they might have grace to find Truth. But

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* There was in 1297 a mart called the New Fair in Soper Lane, Cheapside, and others like it were called "Eve-chepings." They were for the sort of barter still popular among schoolboys as "swapping." Something is offered in exchange against some other thing, and if necessary something else must be thrown in to make the exchange equal. New Fair is in our day carried on through papers devoted to the satisfaction of a taste for "swapping" among grown-up boys and girls.

there was none who knew the way. They went astray like beasts over the brooks and hills.

They met a Palmer* in his pilgrim's weeds, with bowl and bag and vernicle, and asked him "Whence he came?" "From Sinai," he said, "and from the Sepulchre. I have been to Bethlehem and Babylon, to Armenia, Alexandria, Damascus. You may see by the tokens in my cap that I have been to shrines of good saints for my soul's health, and walked full widely in wet and in dry."

"Knowest thou," they asked him, "of a saint that men call Truth; and could'st thou show us the way to where he dwells?"

"Nay," said the man then, "I never knew of palmer with staff and scrip who ever asked after him before, until now in this place."

"'Peter!'† quoth a Plowman, and put forth his head
'I know him as kindly‡ as clerks don their books,
Conscience and Kind-wit§ kenned me to his place
And maked me sykeren him|| siththen to serve him for ever,
Both to sowe and to setten, the while I swink¶ might,
Within and without to wayten** his profit.
I have been his follower all these forty winter,
And served Truth soothly, somdel to paye.††
In all kynne craftes that he couth devise
Profitable to the plough, he put me to learn;
And though I say it myself I served him to paye.
I have mine hire of him well, and otherwhile more;

* The Palmer was one who visited the Holy Places at Jerusalem. Living upon the way by charity, his bowl was for what he found to drink, his bag for bread and meat that might be given to him. The vernicle, worn with other tokens in the cap, was a little copy of the miraculous transfer of the face of Christ to the handkerchief offered him by St. Veronica when he was bearing his own cross to Calvary.

† "Peter!" was a common exclamation in the fourteenth century. It has perhaps a designed fitness in the introducing of Piers Plowman, Peter being the rock on whom Christ built his Church.

‡ *Kindly*, naturally. "Kind," nature.

§ *Kind-wit*, natural knowledge.

|| *Sykeren him*, give him surety.

¶ *Swink*, labour.

** *Wayten*, watch after.

†† *Somdel to paye*, in some part to his content. *To paye*, to his pleasure. Latin "pacare," to satisfy.

He is most prest* payer that any poor man knoweth.
He withholds non hewe† his hire over even;
He is low as a lamb, and leal of his tongue,
And whoso wilneth to wite‡ where that Truth woneth§
I will wissen‖ you well right to his place."

In this manner Piers the Plowman first appears in the Vision. In the field full of folk "working and wandering as the world asketh," repentant men turn from the ills of life, look up to God, and seek for Truth. Those who toil in the mere form of search, but want its soul, know nothing of their need and cannot help. But what is hidden from the wise of this world God has revealed to the humble. "Whosoever would be chief among you let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Under the figure, therefore, of the Ploughman, faithful to his day's labour, the poet first introduces the humility that becomes servant to Truth. Once introduced, the Ploughman presently rises to his place in the poem as a type of Christ himself.

The pilgrims to Truth offered meed to Piers for showing them the way; but he set that aside and freely told them that they must all go through Meekness till they came to Conscience, known to God Himself, and loyally¶ love him as their lord; that is, they must rather die than do any deadly sin, and must in nowise hurt their neighbours or do otherwise to them than they would have them do to themselves. Then as they followed the brook they would find the ford Honour-your-fathers; therein they should wade and wash them well. Then they would come to Swear-not-but-for-need, and by the croft Covet-not, from which they must be careful to take nothing away. Near by it are two stocks, Steal-not and Slay-not, but do not stay there; strike on to the hill Bear-no-false-witness, through a forest of florins. Pluck there no plant, on peril of thy soul! Next they would see Say-sooth, and by that way come to a court clear as the sun; the moat is of Mercy, and the walls are of wit that Will cannot win; the battlements are of Christendom, the buttresses are of Believe-so-or-thou-be'st-not-saved.

* *Prest*, ready. French "prêt."
† *Hewe*, servant. First-English "hiwan," domestics.
‡ *Wite*, know. § *Woneth*, dwells.
‖ *Wissen* (First-English "wissian"), show the way.
¶ The word *leal* or loyal qualifying love throughout Piers Plowman, and otherwise used, has always its first sense of obedience to or accordance with just law.

The houses are roofed not with lead, but all with love and loyalty; the bars are of buxomness as brethren of one body, the bridge is Pray-well-and-the-better-speed. Each pillar is of penance and prayers to saints; almsdeeds are the hinges of the gates, which are kept by Grace and his man Amend-you. "Say to him this for token, 'I am sorry for my sins, so shall I ever be, and I perform the penance that the priest commanded.' Ride to Amend-you, humble yourselves to his master Grace to open the high gate of Heaven that Adam and Eve shut against us all. Through Eve that gate was closed, and through the Virgin Mary it is opened. She hath a latch-key, and can lead in whom she loveth. If Grace grant thee to enter in this wise, thou shalt see Truth where he sits in thine own heart, and solaces thy soul and saves thee from pain. Also charge Charity to build a temple within thine whole heart, to lodge therein all Truth and find all manner of folk food for their souls, if Love and Loyalty and our law be true. Beware then of Wrath, for he has envy against him who sitteth in thine heart and urges Pride in thee to praise thyself. If thy well-being make thee bold and blind, thou wilt be driven out and the gate locked and latched against thee, so that thou mayest not enter again for a hundred years. To that place belong Seven Sisters, who serve Truth ever, and are porters at the postern. They are Abstinence, Humility, Charity, Chastity, Patience, Peace, and Liberality. Unless one be sib* to these seven it is hard to enter in at the gate unless Grace be the more."

"I have no kin among them," said a cut-purse; "Nor I," said an ape-ward; "Nor I," said a wafer maker. "Yes," said Piers Plowman, and urged them all to good: "Mercy is a maid there who hath might over them all, and she and her Son are sib to all the sinful. Through the help of these two ye may get grace there, if ye go betimes." "Yea," quoth one, "I have bought a piece of ground, and now must I thither to see how I like it," and took leave of Piers. Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and therefore I must go with a good will at once to drive them; therefore, I pray you, Piers, if peradventure you meet Truth, so tell him, that I may be excused." Then there was one named Active, who said, "I have married a wife who is changeable of mood, and if I were out of her sight for a fortnight she would lour on me and say I loved another. Therefore, Piers Plowman, I pray thee tell Truth I cannot come, because my Kit so cleaves to me *Uxorem duxi et ideo non possum venire*."† Quoth Contemplation,

* *Sib*, related. First-English "sib," peace, relationship; so Gossip is God-sib, related in God, sponsor in baptism.

† See Luke xiv. 18–20.

"Though I suffer care, famine, and want, yet will I follow Piers. But the way is so difficult that, without a guide to go with us, we may take a wrong turning."

Then said Piers Plowman, "I have a half-acre to plough by the highway. Had I ploughed that half-acre and sowed seed in it, I would go with you and teach the way."

"That will delay us a long time," said a lady in a veil. "What shall we women do meanwhile?"

"I pray you," said Piers, "for your own profit, that some sew the sack to prevent shedding of the wheat; and ye worthy women who work on fine silk with your long fingers, work at fit times chasubles for chaplains to do honour to the Church; wives and widows spin wool and flax, Conscience bids you make cloth for profit of the poor and pleasaunce of yourselves. For I shall feed them, unless the earth fail, as long as I live, for our Lord's love in heaven. And all manner of men whom this earth sustains, help me, your food-winner, to work vigorously."

Quoth a knight, "He counsels the best. I never was taught to drive a team. I wish I could. I should like to try some time, as it were, for pleasure."

"Surely, Sir Knight," said Piers then, "I shall toil and sow for us both, and labour for thee while thou livest, on condition that thou keep Holy-Church and myself from wasters and wicked men who destroy this world. Go boldly to hunt the beasts that break my hedges, and fly falcons at the wild fowl that defile my corn."

Then said the knight, "According to my power, Piers; I plight my troth faithfully to defend thee, and fight for thee if need be."

Then the knight was warned also to respect his bondmen, and remember that before God it was hard to distinguish knight from knave or queen from quean. Ranks might be reversed, when to the lowly it would be said, "Friend, go up higher." The knight is bound to be courteous and avoid the company of idle chatterers who help the devil to draw men to sin. The knight promised for himself and his wife to obey his conscience and work as Piers directed.

Then Piers apparelled himself to go as a pilgrim with those who sought Truth; he hung his seed-basket on his neck instead of a scrip, and a bushel of bread corn was within, "For I will sow it myself," he said, "and then we will go upon our journey. My plough-foot shall be my staff to help my coulter to cut and cleanse the furrows, and all who help me to plough and to weed shall have leave, by our Lord, to go and glean after, and be merry therewith, grudge who may. And I shall feed all true men who live faithfully; not Jack the juggler,

Daniel the dice-player, Robin Ribald, Friar Faitour,* and folk of that order.

Piers had a wife, Dame Work-when-time-is, and the names of his son and daughter mean Obedience. Piers made a will, leaving his body to the Church, to his wife and children all that he had truly earned. Debts he had none. He always bare home what he borrowed ere he went to bed.

Then Piers went to the ploughing of his half-acre by the roadside, and had many to help. At high prime Piers let the plough stand, to see who wrought best; he should be hired thereafter when harvest-time came. Some sat and sang at the ale, helping to plough the half-acre with "Hoy, trolly, lolly!" When urged to work with the threat that not a grain should gladden them in time of need, they pleaded that they were blind, or lame, and could not work: "But we pray for you, Piers, and for your plough too, that God of his grace will multiply your grain and reward you for your almesse that ye give us here. We have no limbs to labour with, we thank the Lord."

"Your prayers would help, I hope, if ye were true," said Piers, "but Truth wills that there be no feigning among those who beg. I fear ye are wasters, who devour what loyal toil has raised out of the land. But the halt, the blind, the prisoners shall eat my corn and share my cloth."

Then one of the Wasters offered to fight with Piers Plowman, and spoke to him contemptuously. Another came bragging, and said, "Will thou or nill thou, we will have our will, and fetch thy meat and flour whenever we like to make us merry." Piers looked to the knight for help. The knight warned Waster courteously that if he did not amend his way he must be beaten, and set in the stocks. "I was never used to work," said Waster, "and I will not begin now." So he took little heed of the law, and less of the knight, and set Piers at defiance.

Then Piers fetched Hunger to punish these misdoers. Hunger soon seized Waster by the throat, wrung him by the belly till his eyes watered, and buffeted him about the cheeks till he looked like a lanthorn all his life after. Piers had to pray off Hunger with a loaf of pease-bread. "Hunger, have mercy on him," said Piers, "and let me give him beans. What was baked for the horse may save him." Then the feigners were afeared, and flew to Piers's barns, and threshed with their flails so stoutly from morning to evening that Hunger was afraid to look on them. Hermits cut their copes into short coats, took spades, spread dung, weeded, for dread of their

* *Faitour*, Make-believe.

death, such strokes gave Hunger. Friars of all five orders worked, for fear of Hunger. Piers was glad, and was sending Hunger away, but asked counsel of him first; since many were at work for fear of famine, not for love.

"Truth," said Piers, "taught me once to love them all; teach me, Sir Hunger, how to master them, and make them love the labour for their living."

Hunger advised that the able-bodied who avoided work should be fed only with the bread of dogs and horses. "Give them beans. If any object, bid him Go, work; and he shall sup the sweeter when he hath deserved."

Hunger quoted many words of Scripture in support of his argument that men were born to work. They should not eat till Hunger sent his sauce, or let Sir Surfeit sit by them at table. If men did thus, Physic should sell his furred hood for his food,

"And lerne labore with londe leste lyflode hym faile.
Ther aren meny luthere* leeches, and lele leches fewe;
Thei don men deye† thorgh here‡ drynkes er destinye hit wolde.'

Piers said that Hunger was right, and bade farewell; but Hunger would not go till he had dined. It was not yet harvest, and there was nothing to be had but a little curds and cream, an oat-cake, a few loaves of beans and pease, parsley, onions, half-red cherries, a cow and her calf, and a cart-mare. But the poor people brought what they could to feed Hunger, who ate all in haste, and asked for more. But when it was harvest-time, and the new corn was in, Hunger ate and was satisfied, and went away. And then the beggars would eat only the finest bread, they would take no halfpenny ale—only the best and brownest that the brewsters sell. Labourers, who had only their hands to live by, would not dine upon worts more than one night old, or penny ale and a piece of bacon, but must have fresh meat and fish, hot, and hotter, because their stomachs were a-cold.§ They would chide if they had not high wages, and curse the laws; but they strove not so when Hunger frowned upon them. Here the poet, reading signs of the stars according to the astrology that formed part of the undoubted science of his day, warned his countrymen, by the aspect of Saturn, that Hunger was coming back; for famine and pestilence were on the

* *Luthere*, bad. First-English "láð," evil, whence our "loathe."
† *Don men deye*, cause men to die. ‡ *Here*, their.
§ See "Vox Clamantis," "E. W." IV. 189.

way to them again. It was a sad prediction which, in those days, must needs be fulfilled. The next of the great pestilences followed a sore famine in 1382.

Truth heard of these things, and sent to bid Piers till the earth; granting a full pardon to him and all who in any way helped at his ploughing: to kings and knights who defended him; to bishops if they were loyal and full of love, merciful to the meek, mild to the good, severe to the bad men of whatever rank when they would not amend; to merchants who earned honestly and made a right use of their gain, repairing the hospitals, mending the highways, helping the fatherless, the poor, the prisoner, helping also to bring the young to school. "Do this," said Truth, "and I myself shall send you Michael, mine angel, that no fiend shall hurt you, and your souls shall come to where I dwell, and there abide in bliss for ever and ever." Then the merchants wept for joy, and prayed for Piers Plowman. It was ill with lawyers who would not plead unpaid, but well with them if they would plead for the innocent poor and comfort them, and maintain their cause against injustice of the strong. There follows upon Truth's message a tender picture of the sorrows of the poor mother of many children, whose spinning barely pays the rent of the low cot, the cost of milk and meal to feed the little ones who hunger as she is hungering herself:—

"And woe in winter-time with waking a-nights
To rise to the ruel,* to rock the cradle,
Both to card and to comb, to clouten† and to wash,
To run and to rely,‡ rushes to pilie,§
That ruth is to read other‖ in ryme shewe
The woe of these women that woneth in cotes."

Still dwelling upon love as the companion of labour, the poet touches on the secret sorrows of poor men, who will not beg or complain or make their need known to their neighbours; whose craft is all their substance, bringing in few pence to clothe and feed those whom they love; to whom a farthing's worth of mussels is a fast-day feast. To help and comfort such as these, and crooked men and blind, is charity indeed. But beggars with their bags, whose church is the brewhouse; if they be not halt, or blind, or sick, if they be idlers who deceive; leave them to work or starve. And those who wander

* *Ruel*, the spinning-wheel.
† *Clouten*, patch.
‡ *Rely*, reel.
§ *Pilie*, peel.
‖ *Other*, or.

wanting wit,—the lunatics and lepers, to whom cold and heat are as one, and who walk moneyless fat and wide, as Peter and Paul did, though they preach not nor work miracles,—to my conscience, it is as if God, giver of wit and health, had sent forth these also as His apostles, without bread and bag and begging of no man, reverencing no man more than another for his dignity, to draw from us love and mercy. They are heaven's minstrels: men give gold to all manner of minstrels in the name of great lords. Rather, ye rich, should ye help with your goods these minstrels of God, whose sins are hid under his secret seal, than the idlers and unlearned eremites who come into the house to rest them and to roast them with their backs to the fire, and leave when they will, to go next where they are most likely to find a round of bacon. These eremites worked till they found out that feigners in friar's clothing had fat cheeks. Such men may truly be called lollers.

> "As by English of our elders, of old men teaching,
> He that lolleth is lame, or his leg is out of joint,
> Or mained in some member, for to mischief it soundeth.
> And right so soothly such manner eremites
> Lollen agen the Belief and Law of Holy-Church."

Because he is a friar, he sits at meat with the first who once sat at a side-bench and second table, tasted no wine all the week, had neither blanket on his bed nor white bread before him. The fault is with bishops who allow such sins to reign. "Simon, why sleepest thou? To watch were better, for thou hast great charge. For many strong wolves are broken into the fold: thy dogs are all blind, thy sheep are scattered, thy dogs dare not bark. They have an ill far, their salve is of *supersedeas* in the summoner's boxes. Thy sheep are nearly all scabbed; the wolf tears away their wool. Ho, shepherd! Where is thy dog?"

To such exhortation a priest answered by calling upon Piers to show the form of the pardon Truth had sent him. Piers unfolded it, and showed it to them all. There were but two lines in it:—

> "*Qui bona egerunt ibunt in vitam eternam;*
> *Qui vero mala, in ignem æternum.*"*

"Peter!" quoth a priest then, "I can find no pardon here! Nothing but—

> "Do well and Have well, and God shall have thy soul,
> Do ill and have ill, and hope thou none other
> But he that ill liveth shall have an ill end."

* The reference is to Matthew xxv. 34-46.

Thus the priest disputed with Piers about the pardon, and with their words, says the Dreamer, I awoke, and saw the sun far in the south, and wandered a mile over Malvern Hills musing upon this dream. What meant Piers Plowman by the pardon wherewith he would gladden the people? what meant the priest by his contention that it was no pardon at all. The dream seemed to him to mean—

"—— that Do-wel indulgences passede,
Biennals and triennals and bishops' letters.
For whoso doth well here, at the day of doom
Worth faire underfong before God that time.
So Do-wel passeth pardon and pilgrimages to Rome.
Yet hath the Pope power pardon to grant
As lettered men us lereth* and law of Holy-Church.
And so I believe loyally, lords forbid else,
That pardon and penance and prayers do save
Souls that have sinned seven siths† deadly.
Ac‡ to trusten upon triennals, truly me thinketh,
Is not so sicker for the soul certes as is Do-wel.
Forthi ich rede you renkes§ that rich ben on this earth
Up trist‖ of your treasure triennals to have,
Be ye never the bolder to break the ten hests.
And nameliche¶ ye maistres, mayors, and judges
That han the wealth of this world, and wise men ben hold,**
And purchase your pardon and the Pope's bulls,
At the dreadful day of doom when dead men shullen rise,
And comen all before Christ accounts to yield
How we had our life here and his laws kept,
And how we did day by day, the doom will rehearse:
A poke†† full of pardon there, ne provincials' letters,
Though we be found in fraternity of all five orders,
And have indulgences doublefold, but‡‡ Do-wel us help,
I set by pardon not a pea nother a pye-heel.
Forthi ich counsel all Christians to cry God mercy
And Mary his mother be our mene§§ to Him,

* *Lereth*, teach.
† *Siths*, times.
‡ *Ac*, but.
§ Therefore I counsel you men.
‖ *Up trist*, upon trust.
¶ *Nameliche*, especially.
** *Ben hold*, are esteemed.
†† *Poke*, bag. First-English "pocca"; pocket, a little bag.
‡‡ *But*, unless.
§§ *Our mene*, our mediator.

That God give us grace here, ere we go hence,
Such works to work while we ben here
That after our death day Do-wel rehearse
At the day of doom, we did as he taught. *Amen.*"

Thus ends, with the second dream, the First Part of the Vision of Piers Plowman, which I am dwelling on the more fully because the book is not yet read and known as widely as it ought to be, and because there is no other work of the fourteenth century that shows so vividly the life of England in those days, and in the midst of all its ills, the rising spirit of a Reformation that sought grace of God in calling every man—king, knight, priest, merchant, peasant—to his duty. Langland opposed no doctrines then accepted by his Church. He joins in testimony to the general corruption of the friars, but finds many monks true to their vows; the place held by Mary in the mediæval Church he gave her without question, and he did not contradict what the Church taught concerning the Pope's power to grant indulgences. Obey Holy-Church, he said, but trust not in what money can buy. A bagful of pardons will surely help you less at the Last Day than grace of God obtained by prayer to Him with true penitence shown by undoing of the evil done, and labour to do well all one's life after. He had no faith in the religion of Say-well who turns his back upon well-doing, or in a love of God that does not show itself by love of man and deeds of mercy. He looks to Christ, and bids men strive to read their duty in the pûre light of our Saviour's teaching.

The Search for Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best.

The second part of his poem—styled in MSS. the vision concerning Do-wel—Langland began by representing himself thus robed in russet, roaming about all a summer season in search of Do-wel. He asked of many where he might be found, and met on a Friday two Franciscan friars.

"You travel much about," he said, "in princes' palaces and poor men's cots. Tell me where Do-wel dwells."

"He is one of us friars," said one; "always has been, and I hope always will be."

"Nay," said Will, "even the just sins seven times a day. He cannot always be at home with you."

"I will explain to you, my son," said a friar, "how we sin seven times a day and have Do-wel. If a man be in a boat on the wild sea of the world, and stumble and fall seven times a day, if his fall be within the boat he is safe and sound. Man has also free will and free wit to row out of sin."

"I cannot follow that," said Will. "We acknowledge Christ who died upon the cross," said the friar; and Will said, "May He save you from mischance, and give me grace to die with a good end."

Then he went farther in a wilderness by a wood-side, and pleasure of the birds' songs caused him to lie under a tree and listen to their lays and lovely notes until he slept, and dreamt. In this his third dream came to him a man like to himself and called him by his name.

"'What art thou?' quoth I, 'that my name knowest?'
'That wotst thou, Will,' quoth he, 'and no wight better.'
'Wot I?' quoth I; 'Who art thou?' 'Thought,' said he then,
'I have thee sewed* this seven year. Seih† thou me no rather?'
'Art thou Thought?' quoth I then, 'thou couthest me wisse‡
Where that Do-wel dwelleth, and do§ me to know.'
'Do-wel and Do-bet,' quoth he, 'and Do-best the third,
Beeth three fair virtues, and beeth not far to find.

Whoso is true of his tongue and of his two hands,
And through leal labour liveth and loveth his em-Christian,‖
And thereto is true of his tale and halt¶ well his hands,
Not dronkelewe ne deynous,** Do-wel him folweth.

Do-bet doth all this, ac yet he doth more:
He is low as a lamb and lovely of speech,
And helpeth heartily all men of that he may spare.
The bags and the by-girdles he hath to-broke them all

* *Sewed*, followed. ‡ *Wisse*, direct.
† *Seih . . . rather*, sawest . . . sooner. § *Do*, make, cause.
‖ *Em-Christian*, even or equal Christian; fellow-Christian.
¶ *Halt*, holds. ** *Deynous*, disdainful.

That the Earl Avarous held and his heirs,
And of Mammon's money made him many friends,
And is run into religion, and rendreth his Bible,
And preacheth to the people Saint Paul's words:

Libenter sufferti insipientes, cum sitis ipsi sapientes.[*]

"Ye worldliche wise, unwise that ye suffer,
Lene them† and love them," this Latin is to mean.
Do-best bear should the bishop's cross
And hale with the hooked end ill men to good,
And with the point put down *prevaricatores legis*,‡
Lords that liven as them lust and no law acounten,
For their muck and their meuble§ such men thinken
That no bishop should their bidding withsit.‖
But Do-best should not dreaden them, but do as God highte,¶
Nolite timere eos qui possunt occidere corpus.'"**

And these three have crowned a king with sole power over the lives of those who will not do as Do-best taught; have crowned one to be king and rule all realms according to their teaching, but no otherwise than as those three assented. The Dreamer thanked Thought for his teaching, but was not yet satisfied. He would go farther and learn more about Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best. Thought directed him to Wit (knowledge). None in the kingdom could tell him better than Wit where those three dwelt. So Thought and the Dreamer went together until they met with Wit.

"He was long and lean, like to none other,
Was no pride in his apparel, nor poverty neither,
Sad of his semblant, with a soft speech."

* "Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise" (2 Cor. xi. 19).

† *Lene them*, give to them; that is, give to them of your knowledge.

‡ Prevaricators of the law. § *Meuble*, furniture.

‖ *Withsit*, withstand; set himself against.

¶ *Highte*, commanded.

** "Fear not them which kill the body" (Matthew x. 28).

The Dreamer, afraid to address him, caused Thought to inquire for him where Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best dwell, what lives they live, what laws they use, and what they dread and fear.

"'Sir Do-wel dwelleth,' quoth Wit, 'not a day hence
In a castle that Kind made of four kyne things;
Of Earth, of Air it is made, medled* together,
With Wind and Water wittily en-joined.
Kind hath closed therein craftily withal
A leman that he loveth well, like to himself,
Anima she hatte,† to her hath envy
A proud pricker of France, *Princeps hujus Mundi*,‡
And would win her away with wiles if he might.
And Kind knoweth this well, and keepeth her the better,
And dooth her with Sir Do-wel, Duke of these Marches.
Do-bet is her damsel, Sir Do-wel's daughter,
To serve that lady leally both late and rathe.§
Do-best is above both, a bishop's peer,
And by his lering‖ is led that ilk Lady Anima.
The constable of that castle that keepeth them all
Is a wise knight withal, Sir Inwit¶ he hatte,
And hath five fair sons by his first wife,
Sir Seewell, Sir Saywell, Sir Hearwell the hende,
Sir Work-well-with-thine-hand, a wight** man of strength,
And Sir Goodfaith Gowell, great lords all,
These five ben ysett for to sauye *Anima*††
Till Kind come or send and keep her himself.'"

"And who is Kind?" asked Will. Wit then described him as the Creator of all things, Lord of Light and Life, who made man in His image, that sin hides from us as clouds obscure the sun. Inwit (Conscience) lives in the head; Anima lives in the heart. Wit added in new form the direct lessons of human love and duty, and dwelt on the relations between husband and wife that should be founded upon higher love than that of money, and have issue in peace, not in contention. But Wit himself had Study for his wife, and she contended with him for giving his wisdom to fools,

* *Medled*, mixed.
† *Anima she hatte*, the Soul she is called.
‡ The Prince of this World.
§ *Rathe*, early.
‖ *Lering*, teaching.
¶ *Inwit*, conscience.
** *Wight*, vigorous.
†† Appointed to keep the soul safe.

"And said, *Noli mittere*, ye men, margerie-pearls
Amonge hogges that haven haws at will."

The world, she said, loves land and lordship more than all the saints can teach. Through her the poet paints contempt of true learning in clerks who argue blindly of the Trinity and send the poor shivering and starving from their gates. Were not the poor more merciful to one another, many would go unfed. Pride is so much enhanced that men's prayers have no power to stay these pestilences. Men now want charity, are gay and gluttonous. Beware, Dame Study said to Wit her husband, beware of showing Holy Writ to swine. Wit laughed and bowed to his wife, and looked at the Dreamer as inviting him to win her grace. The Dreamer bowed, and very courteously prayed that she would teach him to know what Do-wel is. For his meekness, she said, and his mild speech, she would introduce him to her cousin Clergy, who has Study's sister Scripture (written knowledge) for his wife. By their understanding and counsel he should come to know Do-wel. The Dreamer asked the way to Clergy's home, and was bidden to go by the highway to Suffer-both-weal-and-much-woe, and then ride on through Riches without tarrying. "When you come to Clergy say it was I who taught his wife. Many men," said Dame Study, "have been taught by me, but Theology has vexed me ten-score times.

"The more I muse thereon the mistier it seemeth,
And the deeper I dive the darker methinketh it.
It is no science soothly, but a soothfast belief,
Ac for it lereth* men to love, I believe thereon the better."

When Clergy was found, he told the Dreamer that if he coveted Do-wel he must keep the Ten Commandments and believe in Christ. If man's wit could not doubt evidence of the revealed mysteries of God, there would be no merit in Faith. Belief and Loyalty and Love make Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best.

Then Clergy's wife, Scripture (written knowledge), scorned the questioner, and looked to Clergy to get rid of him; saying in Latin, "Many know many things, and not themselves."

The Dreamer wept for woe and awoke, and slept again, and passed into another—the fourth—dream of the Vision.

He dreamt that Fortune took him to the Land of Longing and Love, and bade him look into a Mirror of the World. "Here," she

* *Ac for it lereth*, but because it teacheth.

said, "thou may'st see wonders, and know that which thou covetest to know." Fortune had two fair maidens following her, named Lust-of-Flesh and Covetise-of-Eyes. Pride-of-Perfect-living also followed him fast, and bade him make light of Clergy's teaching. The two maidens offered him their comfort, but there was one named Eld (old age), heavy of cheer, who warned him that he should find Fortune fail him at his need, and that he would then be forsaken by her daughters.*

"Yea, never reck thee," said Recklessness, who stood forth in ragged clothes, "it is a far way yet to Eld."

Sir Wanhope (Despair) was sib to Recklessness, and said, "Go I to hell or heaven, I shall not go alone. If all be true that Clergy and Scripture say, there's not a lord or lady on earth who shall see God in his bliss. The Church says that Solomon and Aristotle are in hell; that Mary Magdalene and the repentant thief are in heaven. A little of God's grace is better than much learning of Clergy and Scripture. Clerks who are most learned can forfeit the heaven that poor loyal labourers and tillers of thes oil reach with a Paternoster. God disposes." Then childish Recklessness drew the Dreamer towards the daughters of Fortune; he thought no more of Do-wel and Do-bet; he cared no more for Clergy and his counsel.

"Alas!" said Eld and Holiness both, "that Wit should become wretchedness, when Wealth has all his will!"

* In this context (Passus XI., l. 46) occurs the passage that has been supposed to indicate the poet's age. Concupiscentia-carnis has colled him about the neck

> "And seyde, thou art ȝonge and ȝepe and hast ȝeres ynowe,
> For to lyve longe and ladyes to lovye;"

Then he says,

> "Coveityse-of-egghes conforted me anon after
> And folwed me fourty wynter and a fyfte more."

But if that forty-five be added to twenty-five, the time of youthful lustihood, they bring us to the three score and ten which are the days of our years according to the Psalmist. The forty-five years can be only meant to span the period from youth to age,—from twenty-one to sixty-six, or from twenty-five to seventy. We cannot prove for Langland a birth-year (1332) by subtracting this poetical forty-five from a hypothetical 1377, the date later than 1372 which has been, however reasonably, no more than guessed for the B text.

But Covetise-of-Eyes solaced the Dreamer, and said, "So thou be rich, have no conscience how thou come to good. Confess to a friar, and thou'rt soon absolved."

He did so; but Fortune presently became his foe, and Poverty pursued him. Then he went to the friar, and could get no absolution without silver. "Why frown'st thou at this friar?" asked Loyalty. "Because he flattered me when I was rich, and will not look upon me now." Here Loyalty gave counsel, and Scripture enforced it with texts, setting forth the grace of God to those who faithfully bear poverty and trials upon earth. Poverty walks in peace, unrobbed among the plunderers. Poverty Jesus chose. The poor may be as having nothing yet possessing all things. The poet dwells at length upon the consolations of the unencumbered poor. Recklessness argued against Clergy until Nature came to Clergy's help, and showed how the beasts follow Reason, while men alone ride away from Reason recklessly. The birds patiently build their nests, and hatch their young; the flowers yield their fit colour and perfume. The Dreamer asked of Reason why he did not rather govern man than beasts. "Ask not," said Reason, "what I suffer from those who sin against me. Who is more long-suffering than God? Be patient. Rule thy tongue. Praise God, and know that none lives without crime."

The Dreamer then awoke, and grieved that he had slept no more. "Sleeping," he said, "I might have found Do-wel. Waking, I never shall."

After this fourth dream of the Vision, while Will mourned, there came to him one who told him that if he had been patient, even though but in a dream, he would have heard Reason confirm the teaching of Clergy. For his pride and presumption of perfect living Reason refused to stay with him. He had been brought to shame for reasoning against Reason. The new counsellor was Imaginative, who said he had followed him these forty years, and often taught him about Do-wel; counselling that to beguile no man, neither to lie, nor to waste time, nor to hurt any true thing, to live humbly, and obey the Church, is Do-wel; but to love and to give, living a good life in faith is called *Caritas*, Kind Love in English, that is Do-bet. In different forms, in short, there is one lesson: Do-wel is the life of truth and justice that should be natural to man; Do-bet rises within himself above simple equity, to the grace of a true Christian charity and self-denial; Do-best multiplies in others these blessings, represses evil in the world, calls forth its good, is the human head of the Church, when he fulfils his duty,—and is above all the divine Head of the Church, who wipes out the sins of the people, and brings many to salvation.

Imaginative tells the Dreamer of the grace of God, of the right use of learning, and of the attention due from the unlearned to those who bring them knowledge. It is well with the lowly who seek heaven. The peacock's tail hinders his flying, and he is harsh of voice. Many a man's riches are as the peacock's tail. The lark is a smaller bird, but he is sweeter of song, sweeter of savour, and swifter of wing:

> "To low-living men the lark is resembled,
> And to leal and to life-holy that loven all truth."

To heathen men who had loved all truth they knew or could discover, Langland makes Imaginative apply the saying of the lord to the steward in Christ's parable of the talents, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

> "And that is love and large hire, if the lord be true,
> And courtesy more than covenant was, what so clerks carpen.
> For all worth* as God's will—and therewith he vanished."

The Dreamer awoke, and mused upon his dreaming till he slept again. In this, his sixth dream, Conscience and Clergy came to him and bade him rise and roam, for he should dine with Reason. To the allegorical dinner—

> "Patience as a poor thing came and prayed meat for charity,
> Ylike to Piers Plowman."

The Dreamer sat with Patience at a side table, served with the sour bread of Penitence and the drink of Long Perseverance. Will was grieved at the gluttony of a doctor at the high dais, whom he had heard preach three days ago at St. Paul's, of the penance through which Paul and all who sought heaven attained its joy. He wondered why the doctor never preached of "perils among false brethren." But (ac), he says—

> "Ac me is loth, though I Latin know, to lacky† any sect,
> For all we ben brethren, though we be diversely clothed.'

Yet this doctor with the great cheeks hath no pity on the poor. Let him be asked, when he is full, said Patience, what penance is; and

* *All worth*, all is, all becomes.
† *Lacky*, find fault with.

whether Do-bet do any penance. Presently this doctor, ruddy as a rose, began to cough and converse. "What is Do-wel, Sir Doctor?" quoth I. "Is Do-bet any penance?" "Do-wel?" quoth this doctor, and he drank after, "Do thy neighbour no harm nor thyself neither, then dost thou well and wisely." "Certes, sir," then said I, "in that ye divide not with the poor ye pass not do well, and do not live as our Lord would, who hath visited and redeemed his people." Then Conscience courteously asked the doctor concerning Do-wel and Do-bet. "Do-wel," he replied, "is do as the doctors tell you; Do-bet is travail to teach others; and he that doth as he teacheth I hold it for a Do-best." Then Conscience asked Clergy also, "What is Do-wel?" "Have me excused," quoth Clergy; "for me that shall remain a question of the schools, for love of Piers the Plowman, who has rejected all kinds of learning and craft—

> "Save love and loyalty and lowness of heart,
> And no text taketh to prove this for true
> But *Dilige Deum et proximum** and *Domine quis habitabit in tabernaculo*, &c.,†
> And proveth by pure skill imperfect all things,
> *Nemo bonus*,‡
> But leal Love and Truth, that loth is to be yfound."

Quoth Piers the Plowman, "*Patientes vincunt.*"§ Suddenly here breaks in the voice of Piers the Plowman, "*Disce, doce, dilige.* Learn, teach, and love God and thine enemy; help him with all thy might; heap coals of gentle words upon his head; give to him again and again in the day of his need; lay on him thus with love until he laughs, and if he do not yield him to this beating, blind he must be." And when he had said thus, no man knew what was become of Piers the Plowman, so privily he went. Reason ran after and went with him, but no others except Conscience and Clergy. Then Patience said, when Piers had passed from them, "They who love loyally covet but little. I could win all France if I would, without any bloodshedding. *Patientes vincunt.* Neither poverty nor malice, heat nor hail, can hurt the man who has taken Patience to his bosom. Per-

* Love God and thy neighbour (Matthew xxii. 37–39).

† Psalm xv.

‡ "There is none good" (Mark x. 18).

§ The patient conquer. "If we suffer we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy ii. 12).

fect love casteth out fear. Live as thou teachest, and the world is at thy feet." "This is all dido," said the doctor. "All the wit of this world and strength of the strong cannot make a peace between the Pope and his enemies that shall be profitable to both parties." Will noticed that Conscience soon quitted this doctor and said to Clergy, "I would liever, if I should live, have patience perfectly than half thy pack of books. I will depart, therefore, with Patience to find Perfectness." So they went their way, and, with great will, the Dreamer followed.

They talked by the way of Do-wel and met Hawkin the Active man, a baker of wafer-bread, who said he was prentice to Piers Plowman, for the comfort of all people. He was very poor, and wished the Pope might bear in his mouth mercy and amend us all; since he hath the power that Saint Peter had, why shall he not lay hands on the sick and they recover; why did he not give health to the sickly air, and stay the pestilence? Is it that men are no longer worthy of such grace?* There would be less pride among men if there were bread for all. But Patience said that though there were no bread, plough, or pottage in existence, yet Pride would shoot forth. Hawkin's own coat was soiled with sins, and he was so busy that he had not time to clean it. But Conscience taught him, and Patience satisfied his hunger with a piece of the Paternoster called "Thy-will-be-done."

Then they met one who was named Free Will, and well known to both Conscience and Clergy. He said he was Christ's creature, to whom neither Peter nor Paul would deny admission into heaven. He went about in man's body and had many names—*Mens*, *Memoria*, *Ratio*, *Sensus*, &c.

"You would like to know what they all mean?"

"I should," said the Dreamer.

"Then you are one of the knights of Pride. God alone can know everything. The priesthood should leave fallacies and insoluble problems that cause men to doubt their own belief, and show the way of holiness by walking in it as guides of the people. Unsound priests get with guile and spend ungraciously; but there is an ill end to those who live against holy love and the love of Charity."

"Charity!" said the Dreamer. "I have often heard that praised, but never met with it. I have lived in London many long years and have never found, as the friars say, Charity that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. I never found layman or clerk who would not ask after his own, and covet besides what he could do without, and get it if he could."

* See "Vox Clamantis," "E. W." IV. 184.

The reply pictures Charity as child-like in gladness with the glad and sadness with the sorry, child-like in faith that what a man declares for truth he holds for truth, and for reverence to God, who is so good, unable to beguile or grieve another. Charity has no laugh of scorn, and takes all griefs of life as ministries from heaven.

"And who," the Dreamer asked, "feeds Charity? What friends hath he, what rents or riches to relieve him at his need?"

"For rents and riches," was the reply, "he never cares. He hath a friend that faileth never. He can find all in Thou-openest-thine-hand,* and Thy-will-be-done feasteth him each day. He visits the prisoners; he tells men of the sufferings of Christ; he takes all the apparel of Pride into his laundry, and it is washed white with his tears."

"Were I with him I would never leave him," said the Dreamer. "But they know him not, who keep the Church."

"Piers Plowman," it was answered, "knoweth him most perfectly. By clothing and talking thou shalt know him never, but by works thou mightest come into his way. He is pleasant of speech and companionable, as Christ himself teacheth, Be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance.† I have seen him myself sometimes in russet and sometimes in gold. He was found once in a friar's frock, but that was long since in the far days of Francis.‡ He seldom comes to court, because of the brawling and backbiting there, or to the consistory, for law there is too slow, except when silver is wanting. He would live with bishops for the sake of the poor, but Avarice keeps him outside their gates. Whoso coveteth to follow Charity must be of such kind as I told you not long ago. He holds it a shame to beg or borrow but of God only, Give us this day our daily bread."

At this point in the narrative the MSS. mark the close of the Vision as far as it concerns Do-wel, and the beginning of Do-bet. There is no man, says the Dreamer, who does not sometimes borrow or beg, and who is not at times wrathful without any sin. "Whosò is wroth and desires vengeance," he is told, "puts aside Charity, if Holy-Church be true. Charity suffers all things. Holy men have lived also without borrowing or begging. Paul, the first hermit, if Augustine be true,

* "That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good" (Psalm civ. 28).

† Matthew vi. 16.

‡ Francis of Assisi, "E. W." III. 308, 309.

was fed by the birds; Paul the Apostle made baskets after his preaching, and earned what he needed with his hands; Peter and Andrew fished. To Mary of Egypt three little loaves sufficed for thirty years. But now no prayers bring us peace; the learned err so much that the unlearned lose belief. The sea and the earth fail, though sea and seed and sun and moon daily and nightly do their duty.* If we did the same our peace would be perpetual. Weatherwise shipmen have now lost their faith in the air and in the lodestar. Clerks say that faith alone suffices. It would be better for us if they did their duty. Saracens might so be saved, if they believed in Holy-Church."

"What is Holy-Church, friend?" asked the Dreamer.

"Charity," was the answer. "Life and love and loyalty in one belief and law, a love-knot of loyalty and leal belief. All kinds of Christians joined together by one will, without guile and gabbing, give and sell and lend. Jews, Gentiles, and Saracens judge themselves that they believe loyally (that is, according to law), and yet their law differeth; and with good heart they honour one God, who is source of all. But our Lord loveth no love unless law be the cause. For dissolute men love against the law, and at the last are damned; thieves love against loyalty, and at the last are hanged; and leal men love as the law teacheth, and love thereof ariseth which is head of charity and health of man's soul. Love God, for he is good and ground of all truth. Love thine enemy entirely, God's hest to fulfil. Love thy friend that followeth thy will, that is thy fair soul."

When Free Will had said much more upon this head, "Dear Free Will," quoth I, "I believe as I hope that thou couldst tell me the way to Charity." Then he smiled, and led me forth with tales till we came into a garden land, it name was *Cor Hominis*, (the Heart of Man). In the midst was a tree called *Imago Dei* (the Image of God). This was the tree of True Love, which shot forth blossoms named Benign Speech, and thereof cometh a good fruit which men call Works of Holiness, of Gentleness, of Help-him-that-needeth, the which is called *Caritas*, Christ's own food. The tree is shored up with three props against the wind of Covetise, that shakes the tree and nips its fruit. The first prop is the Might of God the Father; the second is the Wisdom of the Father in the passion and penance and perfectness of the Son. The Devil comes with a ladder, of which the rungs are lies, to shake the tree; but Free Will then brings down the evil spirit with the third shorer, which is *Spiritus Sanctus*, and that firm belief which is grace of the Holy Ghost. The Dreamer gazed intently on the

* "Dever" ("devoir") is the word here representing duty.

fruit, and saw that it was wondrous fair, and asked if it were all of the same kind. Yes, he was told, but, as in an apple-tree, some are sounder and some sweeter than others. Then the tree was Adam; the fruit in different positions on the tree, some getting more light to ripen the love in them, were men in different positions of life. The contemplative life has more light than the active. The widowhood is above matrimony, maidenhood above them both. The Dreamer, wishing to taste this fair fruit, asked that the tree might be shaken. Eld (old age) shook it, but as the fruit fell the Devil picked it up. Then Free Will of God struck at the fiend with the middle prop, and the Son, with the Father's will, flew with the Holy Spirit to recover the fruit from that accuser.* Then spake the Holy Ghost, through Gabriel's mouth, to a meek maid named Mary. Here the narrative proceeds from the Annunciation to the Birth and Life of Christ, and to the betraying kiss of Judas, and the noise of the carrying of Christ by the Jews to judgment. With that William awoke from his sixth dream.

He awoke and knew not whither Free Will was gone, but waited for him till, on Mid-Lent Sunday, he met a man hoar as a hawthorn, and Abraham he hight. "Whence came you?" the poet asked. "I am with Faith," he said, "who was a herald before there was any law." "What is his cognisance?" "Three persons in one pennon;" and the allegory goes on to set forth a Triune God as the mark of faith. Abraham bare in his bosom a thing that he often blessed. It was a leper. The fiend claimed Abraham and the leper too. Christ only could ransom them by giving life for life. The poet wept at hearing, but presently there came one who ran swiftly.

> "'I am Spes,'† quoth he, 'and speer after a knight
> That took me a mandement upon the Mount of Sinai,
> To rule all realms therewith in right and in reason.
> Lo here the Letter,' quoth he, 'in Latin and in Ebrew,
> That I say is sooth, see whoso liketh.'
> 'Is it a-sealed?' I said. 'May men see the letters?'
> 'Nay,' he said, 'I seek him that hath the seal to keep,
> The which is Christ and Christendom, and a Cross thereon to hang.
> Were it therewith a-sealed, I wot well the truth,

* *Raȝeman* is the name here given to Satan, from Icelandic "rægja," to slander or defame; First-English "wrégean," to accuse.

† *Spes*, Hope.

That Lucifer's lordship lie should full low.'
'Let see thy letters,' quoth I; 'we might the Law know.'
He plight forth a patent, a piece of an hard rock,
Whereon was writ two words in this wise glosed:
*'Dilige Deum et proximum tuum.**
This was the text truly I took full good gome,†
The glose gloriously was writ with a gilt pen:
In his duobus mandatis pendet tota lex et prophetæ."‡

During the talk that arose from the words of Faith (for whom Abraham spoke) and Hope, a Samaritan, travelling their own way, came by them quickly on a mule. He was on his way from Jericho to joustings at Jerusalem. Abraham, Hope, and he came together in a wild wilderness where thieves had fast bound a man who was naked, and who seemed to be half dead. Faith and Hope saw and passed him at a distance; the Samaritan at once drew near, dismounted, and led his mule, poured wine and oil into the stranger's wounds, bandaged them, set him on Bayard, and led him to a grange called *Lex Dei* (the law of God), where he left him to be healed, giving two pence to the hosteler, and saying that he would make good to him what more was spent on medicine; for I may not stay, he said, and re-mounted and sped on towards Jerusalem. Then the Dreamer hurried after that Samaritan, and was taught by him, of the Trinity upon which Faith (Abraham) had dwelt; and of Charity, the theme of Hope. "Every man can love his neighbour if he will," said the Samaritan, and hasted on.

Here ended the seventh dream of the Vision, but the poet slept again and dreamt much of Palm Sunday, of the Palm Sunday hymn, the *Gloria laus* (sung as the procession halts before re-entering the church), and of *Hosanna* sung by old folk to the organ. One who was like the Samaritan, and some part like Piers Plowman, came barefoot on an ass's back, without spurs or spear, as a knight on his way to be dubbed. Then was Faith in a window, and cried, "O Son of David!" as a herald cries when adventurers come to the jousts. Old Jews of Jerusalem sang for joy, "Blessed is he who cometh in the

* Love God and thy neighbour.

† *Gome*, heed. First-English "gýme" and "gýmen," care, heed; "gýman," to take care of.

‡ "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew xxii. 40).

name of the Lord!" Then the Dreamer asked of Faith what this meant.

> "'And who should jousten at Jerusalem?'—'Jesus,' he said;
> 'And fetch that the fiend claimeth, Piers' fruit, the ploughman.'
> 'Is Piers in this place?' quoth I."

Then he was told that Free Will of God had undertaken for love that Jesus should joust in the arms of Piers the Plowman; in his helm and habergeon of human nature. He asked who should joust with Jesus, Jews or scribes? None, he was told, but the Fiend, and the false doom of Death. Death claims and threatens all, but Life hath laid his life to pledge that within three days he will recover from the Fiend the fruit of Piers the Plowman.

Then came Pilate to the judgment-seat, and Jesus was condemned and suffered on the cross, and said, "It is finished." And the day became dark, and the dead rose, and one of the dead told of the battle in darkness between Life and Death. The side of the Saviour was pierced by Longeus, who, in doing so against his will, begged Mercy of Jesus. Presently there came Mercy as a mild maiden walking from the west, and looked hell-ward. Forth from the east came softly walking, clean and comely, one who seemed to be her sister, and her name was Truth. They spoke of what they saw and what should follow, and Truth doubted the high promises of Mercy, that by this death Death should be destroyed. Then out of the north came to them Righteousness (Justice), and Peace out of the south. Righteousness paid reverence to Peace, who said she was come forth to welcome the redeemed. They shall sing, she said—

> "'And I shall dance thereto; do also thou, sister,
> For Jesus jousted well: joy beginneth to dawn.'"

So Mercy and Truth and Peace and Righteousness spoke of Salvation.

Then is set forth in lively narrative the Descent into Hell. A spirit bade unbar the gates.

> "A voice loud in that light to Lucifer said,
> 'Princes of this palace, prest undo the gates,
> For here cometh with coroune the King of all Glory!'"

Then Satan bade the fiends bar out the coming light and hold the gate, but, owning presently that they had not power against Christ, he would appeal, he said, to his justice. Here also Christ crucified prevailed.

Satan was bound; the angels sang in Heaven, and Peace piped a poet's note that when the dark cloud disappears, much brighter for that is the sunshine; so when the Hatreds are gone, brighter for that is the Love.

> "'After sharpest showers,' quoth Peace, 'most sheen is the sun;
> Is no weather warmer than after watery clouds
> Neither love liever, ne liever friendés
> Than after war and wrack, when Love and Peace ben masters.'"

Then Truth and Peace embraced; Righteousness and Peace kissed each other; Truth trumpeted and sang, "We praise Thee, O God!" and then Love sang in a loud note, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Till the day dawned these damsels danced. Then men rang to the Resurrection, and the Dreamer awoke, and called to Kit his wife and Calot his daughter, "Arise, and go reverence God's Resurrection, and creep on knees to the cross."

Here the eighth dream ends, and the rest of the poem is said to be Vision of Do-best. The awakened Dreamer went to mass and sacrament, and sleeping in the midst of the mass, he dreamt again—

> "That Piers the Plowman was painted all bloody,
> And came in with a cross before the common people,
> And right like in all limbs to our Lord Jesu;
> And then called I Conscience to ken me the sooth.
> 'Is this Jesus the jouster,' quoth I, 'that Jews duden to death;
> Other is it Piers Plowman? Who painted him so red?'
> Quoth Conscience, and kneeled then, 'These aren Christ's arms,
> His colours and his coat-armour, and he that cometh so bloody
> It is Christ with his cross, conqueror of Christine.'"

Then Conscience tells the Dreamer of our Lord as Jesus and as Christ. In his youth he was Do-wel. When he was older, and gave eyes to the blind and food to the hungry, he got a greater name, and was Do-bet. When he had died for man, and said to doubting Thomas,

"Blessed are they that see not as thou hast seen, and yet believe," and gave Piers power and might to show mercy to all manner of men, and power to absolve the penitent who seek to pay that which they owe, and power to bind and to unbind; then he became Do-best, and ascended into heaven, whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Then, says the poet, methought the Holy Spirit descended in likeness of lightning upon Piers and his fellows, and made them to know all kinds of languages. I wondered and asked Conscience what that was, and feared the fire with which the Holy Spirit overspread them all. Quoth Conscience, then, and kneeled, "This is Christ's messenger, and cometh from the great God; Grace is his name. Welcome him, and worship him with *Veni, Creator Spiritus*." And I sang then that song, and so did many hundreds, and cried with Conscience, "Help us, God of grace."

Then began Grace to go with Piers Plowman, and counselled him and Conscience to summon the Commons, to take weapons for the battle against Antichrist. Antichrist and his kind were coming to grieve the world; false prophets and flatterers would have the ears of king and earl; Pride would be Pope, with Covetise and Unkindness for his Cardinals. "Therefore," said Grace, "ere I go I will give you treasure, and weapons for the conflict."

Here follows an enumeration of the gifts of the Spirit, followed by the Holy Spirit's counsel to all to be loyal, and each one craft to love others without boast, or debate, or envy. All crafts are given to men variously by the Grace of God. Let men not blame one another, but love as brethren, and crown Conscience for their king. Piers Plowman is appointed steward of God's Grace, and registrar to receive Redde-quod-debes (pay that which is due), the duty done by each. Piers also was appointed to be God's Ploughman on earth, to till Truth with a team of four great oxen named Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the most gentle of all, the prize neat of Piers' Plough, passing all other. Also four stots—Austin, Ambrose, Gregory, and Jerome—to draw the harrow over all those oxen ploughed. Also four seeds, the four Cardinal Virtues—Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice. "Against thy grains begin to grow," said Grace, "prepare thee a house, Piers, for garnering thy corn." "Give me timber for it," said Piers, "ere ye go hence." And Grace gave him the cross with the crown of thorns, and Mercy was the name of the mortar made with the blood shed for man.

Then Grace laid a good foundation, and Piers built a house, and called that house Unity; in English, Holy-Church. Then he devised a cart, called Christendom, to carry home the sheaves, and put two horses

to it—Contrition and Confession—and made Priesthood work with him in tilling Truth.

But Pride espied Piers at the plough, and gathered a great host for assault upon his ground, and sent forth his serjeants-of-arms and his spy Spill-love on Speak-evil-behind, who came to Conscience and all Christians, preparing for the destruction of all Piers's work, and for bringing men out of the house Unity. Pride and Lust then came in arms to waste the world. Conscience counselled all Christians to take refuge in the house of Unity, Holy-Church, and defend it, seeking Grace for helper. Kindwit (natural sense) joined Conscience in urging upon Christian men to dig a great moat about Unity, that might be a strength to defend Holy-Church. Then most repented of their sins. The cleanness of the people, and clean-living of clerks, made Unity, Holy-Church, to stand in holiness. Conscience called all Christians to eat together, for help of their health as partakers of the Lord's Supper, once a month, or as often as those needed who had paid to Piers Plowman Redde-quod-debes.*

"How?" quoth all the Commons; "counsellest thou us to give to every one his due ere we go to housel?"

"That," said Conscience, "is my counsel."

"Yea, bah!" quoth a brewer; "I will not be ruled. It is my business to sell dregs and draff, and draw at one hole thick and thin ale, and not to hack after holiness. Hold thy tongue, Conscience."

Conscience warned him that he could not be saved unless he lived as the spirit of justice taught.

"Then," said a vicar, "many men are lost. I never heard talk in the Church of cardinal virtues, or knew a man who cared a cock's feather for Conscience. The only cardinals I know are those sent by the Pope, and it costs us much, when they come, to pay for their furs and their commons, and to feed their palfreys and the thieves that follow them. Therefore," said this vicar, "I would that no cardinals came among the common people, but that they stayed at Avignon among the Jews, or at Rome, if they pleased, to take care of the relics; and that thou, Conscience, wert in the king's court, never to come thence; and that Grace, of whom thou criest aloud so much, were the guide of all clergy; and that Piers, with his new plough and his old, were Emperor of all the World; that all men were Christian!"

A Lord said, as to Redde-quod-debes, that he held it right and

* *Redde-quod-debes.* Render to all their dues. . . . Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law (Romans xiii. 7, 8).

reason to take of his reeve whatever his auditor or steward and the writing of his clerks made to be his. With a spirit of Understanding they make out the rent-roll, and with a spirit of Fortitude they gather it in, will-he, nill-he. A king said that as he was head of the law, crowned to rule Commons and defend the Church, law would that if he wanted anything, he should take it wherever it could most readily be had. "Whatever I take, I take by the spirit of Justice, for I judge you all; so I may be houseled."

"Yes," said Conscience, "on condition that thou learn to rule thy realm right well in reason and in truth, and that thou have thine asking as the law asks. All things are thine to defend, but not to seize."

Here the vicar, who was far from home, departed, and the ninth dream ended.

Then William went by the way heavy of cheer, not knowing where to eat, and he met Need, who rebuked him for not excusing himself as the king and others had done. He might have pleaded that as to food, water, and clothing, a man who has them not cannot be forbidden to take them without reference to Conscience or the cardinal virtues, if only he obey the Spirit of Temperance, which is a virtue even greater than Justice or Fortitude, or even Prudence, for Prudence may fail in many points. God himself taking the shape of man, was so needy that he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."* Be not ashamed of poverty. And then Will slept again, and there came to him the last of the dreams that form the Vision of Piers Plowman.

He saw Antichrist, in the form of man, spoiling the crop of Truth, and causing Guile and Falsehood to spring and spread in its place in each country that he entered. Friars followed that fiend, for he gave them copes. Whole convents, except only the fools more ready to die than live while loyalty was so rebuked, came out to welcome him, and rang bells in his honour. A false fiend Antichrist ruled over all, and cursed all mild and holy men, and kings who comforted them. So many gathered about Antichrist's banner, and Pride was its bearer.

Conscience counselled men to fortify themselves in Unity, Holy-Church, and call Kind (nature) to their help for love of Piers the Plowman. Then Kind came out of the planets, and sent forth his forayers: fevers and fluxes, coughs and cramps and frenzies, and foul ills. Death came, with his banner borne before him by Old Age, who claimed that office as his right. There was wild battle. Death dashed into dust kings and knights, kaisers and popes, learned and unlearned.

* Matthew viii. 20.

Conscience besought Kind then to stay his wrath, and see whether the people would amend and turn from Pride. But when the punishment was stayed, then Fortune flattered those who were alive, and promised them long life; and the sins warred still against Conscience and his company. Simony followed Avarice, and they pressed on the Pope, and made prelates who held with Antichrist to save their pockets. Avarice came into the king's council as a bold baron, and struck Conscience in the court before them all, compelled Good Faith to fly, held Falseness there, and boldly bare down with many a bright noble much of the wit and wisdom of Westminster Hall. He jogged to a justice, and jousted in his ear, and overtilted all his truth; hied then to the Arches, and turned Civil Law to Simony.

"Alas!" said Conscience, "I would that Covetise, so keen in battle, were a Christian!"

Then Life laughed loudly, and held holiness a jest, and Loyalty a churl, and Liar a free man, Conscience a folly. Life took for his mate Fortune, who said, "Health and I and Highness of Heart shall save thee from all dread of Eld and Death." Life and Fortune became parents of Sloth, who soon came of age and mated with Despair. Sloth used his sling against Conscience, who called Eld (old age) to battle, and Eld fought with Life, who fled to Physic for protection. Life thought leechcraft able to stay the course of Eld. Eld struck a physician in a furred hood, so that he fell into a palsy, and was dead in three days.

"Now I see," said Life, "that Physic cannot help me to stay the course of Eld;" so he took heart and rode to Revel, a rich place and a merry. Eld hastened after him, the Dreamer says, and on his way passed over my head so closely that he left it bald before and bare upon the crown.

"Sir Ill-taught Eld," I cried, "since when was there a highway over men's heads? Hadst thou been civil, thou wouldst have asked leave."

"Yea, dear dolt," he said, and so hit me under the ear, that I am hard of hearing. He buffeted me about the mouth, and beat out my grinders, and gyved me with gout so that I may not go at large. Then Death drew near me, and I quaked for fear, and cried to Kind, "Awreak me, if your will be, for I would be hence."

Kind counselled him to go into Unity, hold himself there till Kind summoned him, and see that he had learnt some craft ere he went thence.

"Counsel me, Kind," quoth I; "what craft is best to learn?"

"Learn to love," quoth Kind, "and leave all other things. If thou love loyally, thou shalt lack nothing while life lasteth."

The Dreamer, therefore, went through Contrition and Confession, till he found his way to Unity, where Conscience was constable, to save Christians besieged by seven great giants, who held with Antichrist. Sloth and Avarice led the attack. "By the Mary," said a priest from the Irish border, so I catch silver, I mind Conscience no more than the drinking of a draught of ale." And so said sixty of that country, and shot against him many a sheaf of oaths and broad-hooked arrows, God's Heart, and His nails, and almost had Holy-Church down, when Conscience cried "Help, Clergy, or I fall." Friars came to the cry; but as they did not understand their work, Conscience forsook them, but offered to be their helper if they learnt to love. Armies under their officers, monks in their houses, have their numbers known; only the friars, like the hosts of hell, are numberless. Envy bade friars learn logic, and prove the falsehood that all things under heaven ought to be in common. But God made a law that Moses taught, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

Envy, Covetise, Unkindness, assailed Conscience, who held him within Unity, Holy-Church, and bade Peace, his porter, bar the gate. Hypocrisy with all the tale-tellers and idle titterers made sharp assault upon the gate, and wounded many a wise teacher who held by Conscience and the four Virtues. Conscience called Shrift, a good leech, who used the sharp salve of penance and duty. Many asked for a surgeon who would handle them more softly, and give milder plasters. Then one who loved ease, and lay groaning in fear that he should be killed by fasting on a Friday, told of a friar named Flatterer, who was both surgeon and physician. Quoth Contrition to Conscience, "Bring him to Unity, for here are many men hurt through hypocrisy." "We have no need," quoth Conscience; "I know no better leech than parson or parish priest, save Piers the Plowman, that hath power over all." Nevertheless, Conscience did not prevent them from calling on that friar Flatterer. Peace questioned him at the gate, and denied him entrance, but Fair-Speech pleaded for him, and the gates were opened. "Here," quoth Conscience, "is my cousin Contrition wounded. The plasters and powders of the parson are too sore, and he lets them lie too long, and is loth to change them. From Lent to Lent he lets his plasters bite."

"That is overlong," saith this limitour; "I think I shall amend it." He gave him a plaster of "Privy-payment-and-I-shall-pray-for-you. Contrition quickly ceased to weep for his wicked works. When Sloth and Pride saw that, they came with a keen will to the attack on Conscience. Conscience again cried, "Clergy, come help me!" and bade Contrition help to keep the gate. "He lies drowned," said Peace.

"This friar with his physic bath enchanted folk, and drenches men with error till they fear no sin."

Then Conscience vowed that he would become a pilgrim over the wide world to seek Piers the Ploughman. "Now, Kind, avenge me, and send me hap and hele till I have Piers Plowman!" And after that he cried aloud upon Grace, till, says the poet, I awoke.

So ends the Vision, with no victory attained. There is a world at war, and a renewed cry for the grace of God, a new yearning to find Christ and bring with Him the day when wrongs and hatreds are no more. Though in its latest form somewhat encumbered by reiteration of truths deeply felt, the Fourteenth Century yielded no more fervent expression of the purest Christian labour to bring men to God. And while the poet dwells on love as the fulfilment of the law—a loyal not a lawless love—he is throughout uncompromising in requirement of a life spent in fit labour, a life of Duty. The sin that he makes Pride's companion in leading the assault on Conscience is Sloth. Every man has his work to do, that should be fruit of love to God and to his Neighbour. For omitted duties or committed wrongs there is in Langland's system no valid repentance that does not make a man do all he can to repair the omission, right the wrong. Langland lays fast hold of all the words of Christ, and reads them into a Divine Law of Love and Duty. He is a Church Reformer in the truest sense, seeking to strengthen the hands of the clergy by amendment of the lives and characters of those who are untrue to their holy calling. The ideal of a Christian Life shines through his poem, while it paints with homely force the evils against which it is directed. On points of theology he never disputes; but an ill life for him is an ill life, whether in Pope or peasant.

> The Soul in battle now, and Love the sword
> That pierces hearts, the fire of zeal a-glow
> Red as a dawn,—the champion of the Lord
> Falls with his sword and fire upon the foe;

Sword of the Spirit, cleaving word of God,
Flame of the Spirit of Eternity;
War of the Spirit, lifting high the rod
Of Peace to blossom in the days to be.

The War's with Antichrist for Christendom,
With Pride, and Sloth, and all the deadly seven
Unending struggle for a life to come,
When Earth shall be within the gate of Heaven.

Still war-stained Love has won but little way,
And often Duty is the slave of Hate,
But never a true word has gone astray,
Least, Langland's war-cry Love! Love! Love is great.

For Love is the fulfilling of the Law,
Love is the leech, the saviour, and the friend
Of all good hopes: Love be the sword we draw,
For only Love will triumph in the end.

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LAST LEAVES.

In the volume of "English Writers" published one-and-twenty years ago, of which a part is here re-cast, the first chapter upon Chaucer followed immediately after the chapter upon Gower, and preceded the description of the Miracle Plays. If this order had been retained there would have been chapters upon Chaucer in the present book, and I had this order in mind when writing the "Last Leaves" of Book III. But it soon became evident that two volumes must be given to a description of our literature in the Fourteenth Century. It has seemed best, therefore, to postpone the account of Chaucer until it can be read by light from study of the other writers of his time. Much is yet to be told of them. There is more to be said of Langland. John Barbour and other men of mark must come into the story. The great Reformation movement of the Fourteenth Century, led in England by John Wyclif, must be accounted for before we can speak of Chaucer with a ready sense of his relation to his time. The notes upon Fourteenth Century Bibliography are also deferred. They will be given at the close of the account of Fourteenth Century literature.

The second of these volumes was dated January, 1888; this fourth is dated in the following December; and, if no unforeseen event occur, the fifth and sixth volumes should follow in May and October, 1889. They will complete the record of the Fourteenth Century, and carry it on from Chaucer to Caxton. The first six volumes of "English Writers" are thus planned to contain a History of our

Literature from the earliest times to the Invention of Printing.

This picture of our English Literature must now and then follow lines of my "First Sketch," published for the use of students. Often, also, it has embodied, and will embody, studies of mine that have appeared elsewhere, and have been made with direct reference to their places in this view of the whole field of a life's work. There are uses for the rivulet before it joins the river; and its course does not cease to be what it was when we have reached the stream to which it flows.

A section of the eleventh volume of "Anglia," published after this book had been printed, contains an elaborate paper by Alex. Hohlfeld, of Leipzig, on the four English sequences of Mystery Plays. A reader who wishes to advance his study of the subject cannot do better than proceed at once to this paper in "Anglia," vol. xi., 1888, pages 219-310 — "Die Altenglischen Kollektivmisterien, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Verhältnisses der York und Towneley Spiele." The writer, looking chiefly to the comparative anatomy of these sequences, regards the York as the oldest type, and sees in the Towneley or Wakefield use made of the York Plays when they were in an older form than that which has come down to us. He discusses a supposed use of detached French Mysteries of the Birth and Passion of Christ by a writer of the Chester Plays. In the Plays ascribed to Coventry he finds an independent course of development; they have no passages derived from any of the other three.

H. M.

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